



NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY FRAMEWORK (2020-2030)

EXTENDED SUMMARY



NATIONAL EDUCATION COMMISSION
JUNE 2022

*NURTURING A SOCIETY OF
PRODUCTIVE, CARING, AND PATRIOTIC CITIZENS*

NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY FRAMEWORK (2020-2030)

Extended Summary



**National Education Commission
Sri Lanka**

June 2022



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PREFACE

The National Education Commission (NEC) was established by the National Education Commission Act No. 19 of 1991, as the apex policy formulation body to make recommendations to the President on Education Policy and on a wide spectrum of matters connected with education reforms and development. Going along with this mandate, and as directed by His Excellency the President, the NEC in October 2020 has commenced the formulation of the National Education Policy Framework 2020-2030 {NEPF (2020-2030)} by taking into consideration of the government policy on education that is outlined in Government Manifesto, and giving due consideration to proposals made in other policy documents prepared by the NEC, Presidential Task Force and the Ministry of Education and also by perusing education sector review reports published recently by international donor and development agencies.

The NEC commenced the policy formulation process by appointing a Steering Committee consisting of 25 members to steer the process and a drafting committee consisting of 10 Expert Groups; one for conducting an overview of the Sri Lankan economy, and national education system and key issues, another expert group for revisiting and reformulating the Vision of Education, National Education Goals, National Learning Competency Domains and level-specific National Learning Competencies, as well as formulating Aims, Core Areas, Elements (Criteria) and Directive Principles (Standards) of the National Education Policy Framework, and 8 other expert groups for formulating policy proposals and recommended strategic activities for 8 sub-sectors of education – Early Childhood Education, General Education, Higher Education, Technical and Vocational Education and Training, Pirivena Education, Special and Inclusive Education, Non-Formal Education, and International School Education. The expert groups have perused all relevant documents and conducted a series of discussions in person as well as via the zoom platform. The NEC also sought public comments by placing an advertisement in 5 newspapers and numerous individuals and organizations made submissions to NEC for consideration. Further, due consideration has also been given to the views and suggestions presented in the report prepared by the State Ministry of Education Reforms, Open Universities, and Distance Learning Promotion, titled “Analysis of Education Reforms Proposals Submitted on the Digital Platform”. Finally, the drafts of the policy documents were further discussed at the respective Standing Committees at the NEC, and the final version of NEPF (2020-20230) was ratified by the Commission.

The Extended Summary of the NEPF (2020-2030) provides the extended excerpt of the full text of the NEPF (2020-2030) which includes detailed analyses of the national education system and its sub-sectors, backed by research and data, and the details of the policy planning framework adopted, and also the past education policy and review documents referred in during policy planning process.

Prof. Harischandra Abeygunawardena
Chairman
National Education Commission
June 2022

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACIS	Advisory Committee for International Schools
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AHEAD	Accelerating Higher Education Expansion and Development
ATI	Advanced Technical Institute
ATP	Action Team for Partnership
B.Ed.	Bachelor of Education
BOI	Board of Investment
BPO	Business Process Outsourcing
CBR	Community-Based Rehabilitation
CBT	Competency Based Training
CDIC	Child Development Intervention Center
CGCS	Career Guidance and Counselling Center
CGTTI	Ceylon German Technical Training Institute
CIS	Colombo International School
CLC	Community Learning Center
CLO	Course/Module Learning Outcome
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DAI	Degree-Awarding Institute
DoE	Department of Examinations
DP	Directive Principle
DQS	District Quota System
DTET	Department of Technical Education and Training
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECE	Early Childhood Education
ECED	Early Childhood Education and Development
EDP	External Degree Programme
EPD	Educational Publications Department
EPF	Employee Provident Fund
EQA	External Quality Assurance
ERC	Ethical Review Committee
ETF	Employees Trust Fund
ETI	External Training Institution
G.C.E. (A/L)	General Certificate of Education (Advanced Level)
G.C.E. (O/L)	General Certificate of Education (Ordinary Level)
GCI	Global Competitiveness Index
GCI/E	Global Competitiveness Index-Education
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GE	General Education
GER	Gross Enrolment Rate
GoSL	Government of Sri Lanka
GP	Guiding Principle

GPA	Grade Point Average
HDI	Human Development Index
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution/Institute
HETC	Higher Education for Twenty-First century
HR	Human Resource
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ILO	Intended Learning Outcome
IQA	Internal Quality Assurance
IRQUE	Improving Relevance and Quality of Undergraduate Education
IS	International School
ISA	In-Service Advisor
ISSC	Industry Sector Skills Council
IT	Information Technology
LEARN	Lanka Education and Research Network
LMI	Labour Market Information
LMS	Learning Management System
MoE	Ministry of Education
MOH	Medical Officer of Health
MoHE	Ministry of Higher Education
MT	Multi-Disciplinary Team
NAITA	National Apprentice and Industrial Training Authority
NCoE	National College of Education
NCPD	National Council for Persons with Disabilities
NCS	National Competency Standard
NDT	National Diploma in Teaching
NEC	National Education Commission
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NEG	National Education Goal
NEPF	National Education Policy Framework
NEREC	National Education Research and Evaluation Centre
NES	National Education System
NFE	Non-Formal Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIE	National Institute of Education
NITAC	National Industrial Training Advisory Committee
NLCD	National Learning Competency Domain
NLCF	National Learning Competency Framework
NMRC	National Monitoring and Regulation Committee
NQAA	National Quality Assurance Agency
NSECD	National Secretariat for Early Childhood Development
NSHEI	Non-State Higher Education Institution
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
NVQF	National Vocational Qualifications Framework
NVTI	National Vocational Training Institute
NYC	National Youth Council
NYSC	National Youth Services Centre

OBE-SCL	Outcome-Based Education and Student-Centered Learning
OCUSL	Ocean University of Sri Lanka
OJT	On-the-Job Training
OS	Open School
OUSL	Open University of Sri Lanka
PAE	Provincial Administrative Entity
PEA	Provincial Education Authority
PG	Postgraduate
PHS	Public Health Service
PICTEC	Provincial Information Communication Technology Education Centre
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PISA	Program for International Student Assessment
PLO	Programme Learning Outcome
PQAA	Provincial Quality Assurance Agency
PRCC	Performance Review and Coordinating Committee
PwD	Person with Disabilities
QA	Quality Assurance
QAC	Quality Assurance Council
QACGE	Quality Assurance Council for General Education
QIS	Quality Improvement System
QMS	Quality Management System
ROI	Return on Investment
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SAIS	Specified Authority for Regulation of International Schools
SBA	School-Based Assessment
SBS	Subject Benchmark Statement
SDC*	School Development Committee
SDC+	Staff Development Centre
SDS	School Development Society
SE	Special Education
SEAC	Special Education Assessment Committee
SEN	Special Educational Need
SEPI	Self-Employment Promotional Initiative
SGC	School Guidance and Counselling
SGCS	School Guidance and Counselling Service
SHEI	State Higher Education Institution
SLAS	Sri Lanka Administrative Service
SLEAS	Sri Lanka Education Administrative Service
SLIATE	Sri Lanka Institute of Advanced Technological Education
SLPS	Sri Lanka Principals' Service
SLQF	Sri Lanka Qualification Framework
SLTAS	Sri Lanka Teacher Advisors' Service
SLTC	Sri Lanka Teacher Council
SLTES	Sri Lanka Teacher Educators' Service
SLTS	Sri Lanka Teachers' Service

* General Education

+ Higher Education

SMDB	School Management and Development Boards
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
SSDP	Skills Sector Development Programme
STEAM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
STR	Student-Teacher Ratio
TC	Teacher Centre
TEI	Teacher Education Institute
TG	Teachers' Guide
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
TVEC	Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UDL	Universal Design for Learning
UGC	University Grants Commission
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UoVT	University of Vocational Technology
VC	Vice Chancellor
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VTA	Vocational Training Authority
WB	World Bank
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization
ZICTEC	Zonal Information Communication Technology Education Centre

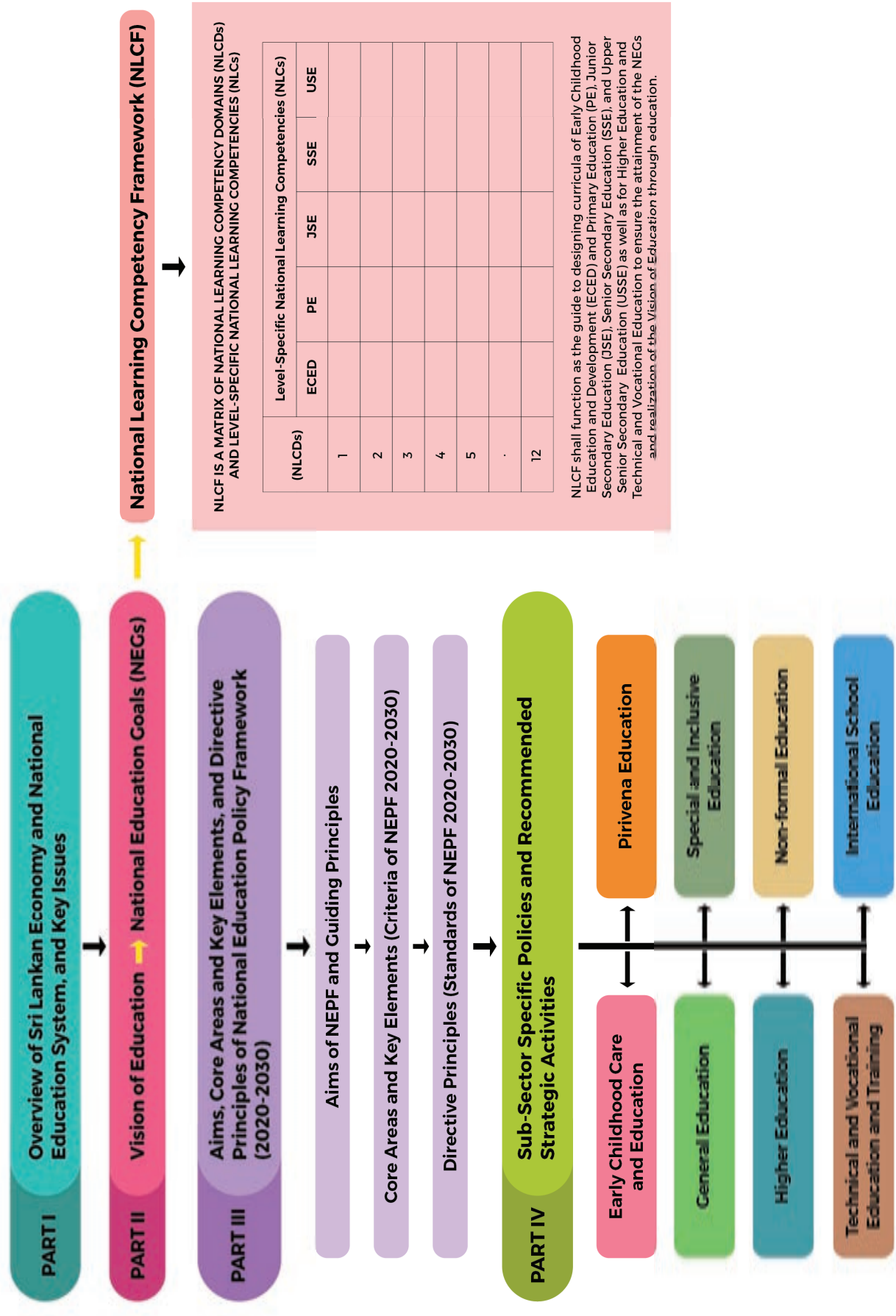
INTRODUCTION

The National Education Commission (NEC), mandated by the National Education Commission Act No. 19 of 1991 has formulated the National Education Policy Framework (2020-2030) {NEPF (2020-2030)}, on the premise that this policy framework will nurture the National Education System (NES) to realize the Vision of Education and the National Education Goals (NEGs) while strengthening and expanding the existing system, in terms of regulatory frameworks, resources and systems, procedures and quality and relevance of outcomes. Thus, the NEC policy planning process has ensured, it is the Vision of Education and the accompanied NEGs that should run as the 'silver thread' continuing through the entire policy development process. In order to avoid exclusions and inward-looking policy planning that focuses only on current issues and gaps, the NEPF (2020-2030) has been designed by adopting the following framework with four sequential steps:



The outcomes of Steps I, II, III, and IV are detailed respectively in Part I, II, III, and IV of the NEPF (2020-2030). This process is diagrammatically depicted in Figure 1 given below.

Figure 1: Sequential Steps Adopted in Developing the NEPF (2020-2030) and Scope and Purpose of Each Step and their Elements



Source: Author's Illustration

PART I

OVERVIEW OF SRI LANKAN ECONOMY AND NATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEM, AND KEY ISSUES

1. OVERVIEW OF SRI LANKAN ECONOMY
2. OVERVIEW OF SRI LANKAN EDUCATION SYSTEM
3. PERFORMANCE OF SRI LANKAN EDUCATION SYSTEM IN THE NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND GLOBAL CONTEXT
4. CONCLUSION

Sri Lanka has often been acclaimed for its achievements in education. These are the results of the progressive policy reforms and developments that have been implemented since the early 20th century. The Education Ordinance of 1939, marks a watershed in education policymaking. It paved the way for a more equitable education system that opened up education opportunities for children from all backgrounds. Further, the system ensured equitable access to education through widespread financial and other welfare programmes. Some notable reforms since 1939 include the introduction of free education from primary to university level in 1947, the establishment of the first University in Sri Lanka in 1942, and aiding students to pursue higher education in vernacular languages from the 1960s. Such reforms have enabled large numbers of children from all socio-economic backgrounds to access education at the university level and improve their social and economic standing in society. Nevertheless, over time, development, globalization, and technological changes have changed the socio-economic context of the country. With that, the education needs and demands of the country have also changed. Consequent to those issues such as access to education, particularly for higher education, the mismatch between demand and supply for higher education, increased unemployment amongst the more educated youth, particularly among graduates, and mismatches between skills demanded by the market and those that are provided by education have emerged, highlighting the need for urgent education reforms.

1. OVERVIEW OF SRI LANKAN ECONOMY

Sri Lanka's economy has diversified from an agrarian economy to a more service-oriented economy since liberalization in 1977. However, the global economic downturn starting in 2008 was a setback to the economy, which slowed down export performance and subdued the progressive developments on the domestic front. Despite these unfavourable developments, the country managed to maintain a high growth rate in the immediate post-conflict period, helped by accelerated growth in the construction sector due to a marked emphasis on infrastructure development by the government. In recent years, however, Sri Lanka's growth has slowed again due to macro instability as well as due to different types of disasters (*e.g., the Easter Sunday bomb attack of 2019 and the Covid-19 pandemic that started in early 2020*).

Economic growth has resulted in the growth of per capita income, and the per capita GDP of Sri Lankans has increased from USD 294 in 1977 to USD 3852 in 2019. With the increase in economic growth experienced during the past four decades, Sri Lanka has graduated from a low-income country to a middle-income country. It is now at the brink of graduating into an upper-middle-income country status. With the increase in per capita income, the share of income spent on food and other essential goods goes down, and consumers have more money to spend on leisure and investment in education and health. A recent study shows that higher-income consumers spend more on school fees, tuition fees, higher education, and vocational training. Such changes in consumption patterns are accompanied by the increased demand for better quality and more diversified education.

Economic growth has also contributed to human development over time. Sri Lanka's overall human development as measured by the Human Development Index (HDI), as of 2019 gained a value of 0.782 with a rank of 72 out of 172, and it is much higher than those of other South Asian countries and other lower-middle-income countries in Asia. It also performs better than some upper-middle-income countries, such as Thailand. This is due to better performance in all three dimensions of human development: health, education, and income. However, in comparison with higher-income countries such as Australia, Singapore, and the Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka needs to take decisive efforts to perform better in all aspects.

Since the turn of the millennium, with marked advances in technological development, countries have increasingly looked into research and innovation to stay competitive and drive economic growth. Although having superior performance in relation to education, in terms of competitiveness, as measured by Global Competitiveness Index (GCI) in relation to Education (GCI/E), some of the other low-middle-income countries such as India and Vietnam

have outperformed Sri Lanka. This is partly due to better performance in ICT adoption and innovation capability in those countries (Table 1).

Table 1: Sri Lanka’s Performance in the Global Competitiveness Index in Relation to Education- 2019

Income Category	Country	The Global Competitiveness Index (GCI)		Selected Main Pillars of GCI			Innovation Capability Pillar
		Overall Index	Rank	ICT adoption-pillar	Skills	Innovation Capability	Research and Development
High Income	Australia	76.6	16	73.6	80.6	69.5	77.3
	Republic of Korea	79.6	13	92.8	74.0	79.1	92.5
	Singapore	84.8	1	87.1	78.8	75.2	70.5
Upper Middle Income	Malaysia	74.6	27	71.6	72.5	55.0	44.0
	Thailand	68.1	40	60.1	62.3	43.9	33.6
Lower Middle Income	Sri Lanka	57.0	84	40.3	63.8	34.9	21.0
	Vietnam	61.5	67	69.0	57.0	36.8	24.9
	Bangladesh	52.1	105	39.1	46.1	30.7	23.3
	India	61.4	68	32.1	50.5	50.9	57.1
	Nepal	51.6	108	38.6	49.3	29.4	20.6
	Pakistan	51.4	110	25.2	40.8	35.8	26.0

Source: World Economic Forum. (2019). *The Global Competitiveness Report 2019*. Retrieved August 3, 2021 from United World Economic Forum: http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_The_Global_competitiveness_Report2019.pdf

This setback is primarily due to the failure of education, science and technology, and research and innovation sectors to cope with global trends. As envisaged, the technological changes happening across the globe are influencing structural changes of all economies, and accompanied with it are the labour requirements and skill profiles. Many tasks done by low-skilled manual workers are now done by machines, and the demand for low-skilled workers is decreasing. At the same time, the demand for high skilled managers and technical professionals who can adopt new technologies is also increasing. Further, technological change has enabled companies to hire off-site/off-shore service sector workers. Such Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) has contributed to increasing service sector jobs. This too has contributed to increasing the demand for skilled human resources in developing countries, as more developed countries outsource their work to benefit from cheaper labour in developing countries. Further, with the commencement of the adoption of innovation-driven economic growth strategies, more developed countries have looked to invest in training skilled workers as well as attract talent from across the world to ensure an adequate supply of skilled workers in their economies. Sri Lanka too has reiterated the need to move to a knowledge-based economy to become competitive in the global context through innovations and investment in high-tech, export-oriented industries. It is well perceived that research and development are an essential part of innovation. However, Sri Lanka’s performance has been particularly low in terms of research and development – a sub pillar within the innovation capability pillar of the GCI/E. Not only high-income and upper-middle-income countries, but even some lower-middle-income countries have outperformed Sri Lanka in research and development.

In conclusion, Sri Lanka besides facing many challenges on different fronts is faced with a formidable challenge with respect to its drive to become a knowledge-based economy. To achieve this enviable goal, it needs more and more science and technology (S&T) workers. Yet, training S&T workers to meet the demands of the market is becoming more and more difficult as is the case with many developing countries. First, to supply a steady stream of S&T

workers, countries need to plan well in advance. This is because human resources in science and technology take a long time to create. Second, globally there is a competition for talent. With the dawn of the new millennium, many countries changed their immigration laws to attract highly skilled workers. Many such skilled workers are sourced from developing countries, which are unable to provide lucrative employment opportunities to trained individuals. This makes education planning for skilled workers harder for developing countries, as they need to take into account not only the changes in demand locally but also the changes in demand internationally. They also need to take into account the global trends in migration to ensure that they train adequate numbers of skilled workers to compensate for outbound migration. Third, it is difficult to cater to the fast-changing demands of the market given the fiscal and other resource limitations.

2. OVERVIEW OF SRI LANKAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

Sri Lanka has a fairly developed, extensive education system consisting of several levels including, i) Early Childhood Education, ii) General Education, iii) Higher Education, and iv) Vocational and Technical Education and Training. In this broader system of education, there are several sub-sectors of education such as i) Pirivena Education, ii) Special and Inclusive Education, iii) Non-Formal/Adult Education, and iv) International School Education.

2.1. Salient Features of the Education System

2.1.1. Early childhood education sector

Early Childhood Education (ECE), a subset of early childhood care and development programmes, primarily targeting children aged 3-5 years and it is concerned mainly with school readiness besides providing support for child care and development. As of 2018 data, there are approximately 19,668 Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres in the country that enrol a total of 578,160 children aged 2–5 years. Approximately 71% of ECD centres are stand-alone centres, privately managed as pre-schools. The remaining are managed by public institutions and local government authorities, such as municipal and urban councils (19.8%), religious organizations (6.8%), and non-governmental organizations (3%). The enrolment rate of three to five-year-olds in pre-school education is 55.6% with disparities in enrolments among urban, peri-urban, and rural areas, and among high- and low-income groups. The enrolments are largely equitable across boys (50.3% of total) and girls (49.7% of total).

2.1.2. General education sector

Sri Lanka adopts a 13-year span for general education, starting at age five. School education is divided into four levels: primary, junior secondary, senior secondary, and upper senior secondary or collegiate levels. There are 10,155 schools in the country. Of these 373 (*generally called 'National Schools' amounting to 3.7% of schools*) come directly under the purview of the Ministry of Education (MoE) while the remaining 9,792 (*generally called 'Provincial School' amounting to 96.3% of schools*) come under the Provincial Departments of Education. In addition, according to the 2020 school census, there are 90 government-approved aided and non-aided private schools operating along with State schools. In 2020, there were 4,063,685 students in the school system. These included 2,018,151 boys and 2,045,5354 girls; and, 1,640,647 primary, 1,357,437 junior secondary, 636,985 senior secondary, and 421,114 upper senior secondary or collegiate level students.

Public schools are again classified into 4 types, based on the number of grades offered by the school and the types of subjects offered for the G.C.E. (A/L) programme: Type 1AB schools with Grades 1-13 or 6-13 offering all 4 academic streams at G.C.E. (A/L) – science and mathematics, arts, commerce, and technology (9.8%); Type 1C schools with Grades 1-13 or 6-13 with G.E.C. (A/L) programme but offering only arts and commerce streams (19%); Type 2 schools with only Grades 1-11 (31.7%); Type 3 schools with only Grades 1-5 or Grades 1-8 (39.4%).

2.1.3. Higher education sector

At present, there are 17 universities (*with 2 additions in 2021 and 2022*), 2 campuses, and 20 post-graduate and other higher education institutions operating under the purview of the University Grants Commission (UGC). In addition, there are 6 universities/institutes established by the Acts of Parliament of Sri Lanka and about 23 non-State higher education Institutions recognized as degree-awarding institutions by the UGC/MoHE. In addition to State universities, there are two categories of non-State higher education providers in Sri Lanka: (a) degree-awarding institutions operating with the approval of the UGC/MoHE and (b) private higher education institutions registered under the Board of Investment, offering overseas degrees through cross-border arrangements. In 2019, 15 State universities produced 24,890 graduates with bachelor's degrees and offered 9,991 postgraduate degrees. In addition, the private higher education institutes serving in Sri Lanka have produced 6,074 graduates with bachelor's degrees and offered 15,067 postgraduate degrees during the same period.

2.1.4. Technical and vocational education and training

As of 2020 statistics, Sri Lanka had 2,946 technical and vocational education training (TVET) centres registered with the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC). Of these, 1,146 centres were operating with valid registrations while the remaining 1,800 had operated with expired registration. There are 1,097 public sector TVET centres operated by different agencies, including the National Apprentice and Industrial Training Authority (NAITA), Vocational Training Authority (VTA), Department of Technical Education and Training (DTET), and the National Youth Council (NYC). According to the TVEC Labour Market Bulletin (2019), there were 250,690 trainees enrolled in TVET courses and of which 142,906 were males and 107,784 were females.

2.1.5. Pirivena establishments

Pirivena is a monastic education establishment for providing education, primarily for monks. It is structured as *Mulika Pirivena* (Primary Level), *Maha Pirivena* (Secondary Level), and *Piriven Vidyayathana* (Tertiary Level). As of 2020, there were 816 Pirivena establishments registered and supported by the MoE. There were 7,336 teachers catering to 69,878 students both bikku and lay students.

2.1.6. Special and inclusive education

As of 2018 data, there were 48,784 children with special education needs (SENs) attending regular schools; out of this, 24,518 children with SENs (50.3%) were among the 1,672,350 total population of students in Grade 1-5 (1.5%) and 24,266 children with SENs (49.7%) were among the total population of 2,535,634 students in Grade 6-13 (0.96%). As of 2019 data, within the government school system, there are 704 Special Education Units functioning in national and provincial schools across the country serving 7,513 students with SENs. Moreover, there are 26 assisted special schools managed by independent boards of management and 03 special schools operating under the MoE, and these schools together currently cater to 2,467 students with SENs. In addition, many students with special education needs are learning in private schools and educational institutions run by non-governmental organizations and religious and charitable organizations.

2.1.7. Non-formal education

In 2017, there were 89 Community Learning Centres (CLCs) operated by the Non-Formal and Special Education (NF & SE) Branch of the MoE, located across the country. More women (85.5%) than men (14.5%) were taking part in these programmes. In addition, non-formal education programmes are offered by several ministries, departments and institutions as well as by numerous non-governmental organizations.

2.1.8. International schools

Since the early 1980s, a new form of private schools came into existence. These schools generally catered to students preparing for examinations administered by international agencies, using English as the primary medium of instruction. These are popularly denoted as 'International Schools'. These do not come under the purview of the MoE, but are registered under the Board of Investment and incorporated under the Companies Act No. 07 of 2007 or under the Business Names Registration Ordinance No. 8 of 1938 and No. 7 of 1987. As of the Annual School Census Report (2019), there were 392 international schools operating outside the purview of the MoE in Sri Lanka with a total teacher population of 13,731 catering to 143,123 students.

2.2. Challenges Faced by the Current Education System

Despite early achievements in education, there is increasing evidence that education reforms in the country have not kept up with economic, social and technological changes described in Section 1. This section briefly discusses the issues facing the education sector at different levels of education – pre-primary, general (*which include primary, secondary, senior, and upper senior secondary*), higher, and technical and vocational education levels.

2.2.1. Pre-primary education

It is now well recognized that early childhood education (ECE) is important among other things for improving life-long learning, laying the foundation to preparing children for further education, and maximizing the returns from higher levels of education. However, as of many reports, the government involvement in providing pre-school education in the country is very small. In 2019, only 55.6% of 3 to 5-year-olds were enrolled in pre-school education in the country, with a roughly equal share of girls (49.7%) and boys (50.3%). Further, there are large inequities in access to pre-school education in the country. Among children aged 3-4 years, the pre-school attendance is 39% and 56%, respectively in the poorest and the richest income quintiles, a 13-percentage point difference. On the positive side, there are several policy documents on the pre-primary education sector. However, implementations of these have been delayed, primarily due to bureaucratic reasons. The absence of well-defined and prescribed standards and guidelines for early childhood care and education centres, and a curriculum framework with expected outcomes is also hampering the effectiveness of pre-school education in the country. Poor facilities, lack of trained teachers, poor remuneration rates for staff, limited involvement of parents, and lack of information on pre-school education are some of the identified issues facing the pre-school sector in the country.

2.2.2. General education

The general education system, as described below, is faced with several issues that require urgent attention. These include low access to general education, particularly to secondary and upper secondary education, poor quality and relevance of education provided, skewed distribution of types of streams of education offered at senior and upper-senior secondary or collegiate level, and unregulated international schools.

Access and participation: Though the participation in education at the primary (*Grades 1-5*) and junior secondary (*Grades 6-9*) are at the near universal level, and similar for boys and girls, the participation decreases towards the senior and upper senior secondary level of education. Along with lower levels of participation, the disparities in education also increase, with lower access to education for those coming from poorer households.

Poor quality and relevance: Poor quality and relevance of education is also a pressing issue in the country. There are a plethora of underlying issues affecting the general education sector. These include issues related to curriculum development, curriculum content, and curriculum delivery and assessments; issues with textbooks and teachers' guides; delays in school to 'world of work' transition; inadequate access to higher education; poor teacher quality emanating from inadequacies in pre-service and in-service teacher training; issues relating to quality assurance in general education; issues with education planning and management, and learning environment; and

inadequate emphasis given for the provision of guidance and counselling for students. In addition, many reports and educationists have highlighted the gradual erosion of discipline, tolerance, and resilience in Sri Lankan society, and they have attributed this to the failure of the education system, particularly the general education to inculcate Sri Lankan values and norms, ethics, positive attitudes or mind-set, respect for others and their views, and pluralism and patriotism.

Skewed distribution of types of subject streams offered: The type of subject streams offered in schools is one of the major issues that need to be resolved urgently. According to the statistics given in the Annual School Census Report in 2020, of the 2,932 schools offering G.C.E. (A/L) education (28.87% of the total schools), only 1,000 schools (34.1% of schools with G.C.E. (A/L) stream) which are categorized as Type 1AB schools offer all four streams of education for G.C.E. (A/L) (i.e. science and mathematics, arts, commerce, and technology) while the rest of G.C.E. (A/L) schools, the Type 1C schools (65.89% of total G.C.E. A/L schools) offer only arts and commerce streams at G.C.E. (A/L). This low accessibility to 1AB schools appears to be the primary reason for high enrolment rates for arts and commerce streams at G.C.E. (A/L).

In addition to this structural deformity in distribution schools and unavailability of science and mathematics streams at senior secondary education level in most schools, the shortage of teachers for teaching the subjects of science and mathematics is another reason for limiting the access to science and mathematics education at G.C.E. (A/L). As a result, many students do not get a good foundation in science and mathematics in lower grades, and as such, they appeared to have developed a fear in following the science and mathematics stream at advanced level education, and these students invariably opt for arts and commerce streams. Still some others opt for art and commerce streams despite having opportunities to follow science and mathematics and technology streams, primarily to boost their chances of entering into university-level education. As a result of all these reasons, the arts and commerce stream students account for the highest percentage of students (62.8%) becoming eligible for higher education.

2.2.3. International schools

International schools have mushroomed over the last 4 decades without having any regulatory control by the Ministry of Education. The low public perception about the quality of education offered by some public schools and the low accessibility to better quality public schools have contributed to an increasing number of students being admitted into private education institutions. As they are not coming under the purview of a regulatory authority or quality assurance agency, the quality of education provided by these schools is uncertain. Further, as they are registered with different agencies, the data and information on these schools related to the number of students, teachers, and facilities, types of curricula and teaching and training methods, students' performance, etc., are not available. Moreover, as there is no information with regard to the curricula adopted by these schools, there is uncertainty as regards the alignment of the educational provisions with the prescribed Vision of Education and National Education Goals of the country.

2.2.4. Higher education

As of UGC data in the year 2019, 24,890 graduates obtained their qualifications from public universities. These numbers account for only 7.8% of the 18 to 23-year-old population of the country. Out of this 24,890, 9,380 (37.8%) were arts stream graduates and 5,445 (21.9%) were commerce and management stream graduates. Both these groups have consistently experienced low to medium employability in the employment market. On the other hand, only 3,242 (13.0%) of graduates were from the streams of biological sciences (*that include biological science, medicine, dental science, veterinary science, agriculture, allied health sciences, indigenous medicine, etc.*), and 5,871 (23.6%) of graduates were from physical science stream (*that includes physical science, engineering, computer science, architecture, etc.*) who face moderate to high employment prospects.

As regard to 2018/2019 intake, data have shown that the enrolment into arts, management, and commerce study programmes which have relatively low employability accounted for 48.2% of the intake, while the rest of

the disciplines, mostly science-based study programmes which have high to medium employability accounted for 51.8% of the total undergraduate enrolment. This pattern is not different from that of private higher education institutes as the fields such as management, business, and ICT are the most offered, affordable, and widely enrolled study programmes.

Thus, the legacy of problems of skewed enrolment and distribution in favour of arts and commerce streams in secondary education is also reflected in the programmes of choices of those entering higher education. This skewed distribution in favour of arts graduates has put Sri Lanka in an unenviable place in the global context. As of the World Bank Sector Review Report (2017), Sri Lanka in global comparison produces the highest proportion of graduates in humanities and social sciences (*ranking 1st*) while producing one of the lowest percentages of graduates in science, engineering, and allied fields (*ranking 92nd*). It has been statistically shown, that the graduates from the humanities and social sciences fields have difficulties in finding gainful employment, and when they do, often end up in sectors that are only tangentially related to their fields of study, whereas the science, engineering, and IT graduates, who are relatively few in number, have little difficulty in finding a job, and it usually corresponds to their disciplines. Therefore, there are compelling reasons to improve science and mathematics and technology education in the country and this requires a multipronged approach – improving opportunities for science and mathematics education at senior secondary and upper senior secondary level, improving the quality and quantity of teachers in science and mathematics subjects, and increasing opportunities for science and mathematics, engineering and technology streams of education at the university level, etc., are the few interventions among many to give high priority.

In addition to the above mentioned issues, the higher education sector is also grappling with the issues of limited access to university education (*particularly for popular fields of higher education*), outdated curricula and poor quality and relevance of educational offerings, conventional teaching-learning, and assessments methods and tools, rigidities prevailing among faculties/discipline preventing resource sharing and cross-discipline course offerings (*particularly for students enrolled in art, science, and commerce streams to take supplementary courses from other faculties through cross-faculty course combinations*), and poor outlook of graduates who lack essential psychosocial or non-technical skills. Addressing these issues is even more challenging with limited funds and resources available for the higher education sector. In addition to these, university admission policy, age of students when starting university education and at graduation, and student discipline are persistent problems facing the university sector.

2.2.5. Technical and vocational education and training

The TVET sector mainly caters to school dropouts and school leavers after G.C.E. (O/L) or G.C.E. (A/L) qualifications. The TVET institutions offer education programmes targeting certificate, diploma, and higher diploma and degree-level qualifications. As of 2019 data, there were 250,690 trainees enrolled in TVET courses offered by State and non-State TVET training centres. Most of them are enrolled for certificate level qualifications. Courses are offered by a variety of formal and informal institutions operated by private, public, and NGO sectors. Some TVET institutions are very successful in producing certificate/diploma holders who are highly demanded in the labour market. But, the employability of the majority of TVET certificate/diploma holders is low, primarily due to inadequate practical skills resulting from the inadequacies of the training provided. Further, the lack of soft skills such as problem-solving, teamwork, and leadership skills, which are demanded by the employers is another issue faced by the TVET certificate/diploma holders.

3. PERFORMANCE OF SRI LANKAN EDUCATION SYSTEM IN THE NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND GLOBAL CONTEXT

3.1. Access to and Participation in Education

In the earlier phases of education development in the country, emphasis was placed mainly on improving access to education. As reported by many reports, the net enrolment rates in education at the primary and junior secondary levels are on par with those of advanced countries in the region, but the net enrolment rates at the senior secondary and upper senior secondary levels are less than the optimal. In most advanced countries, the net enrolment rates at the upper senior secondary level are more than 90%, while it is only 84% in Sri Lanka.

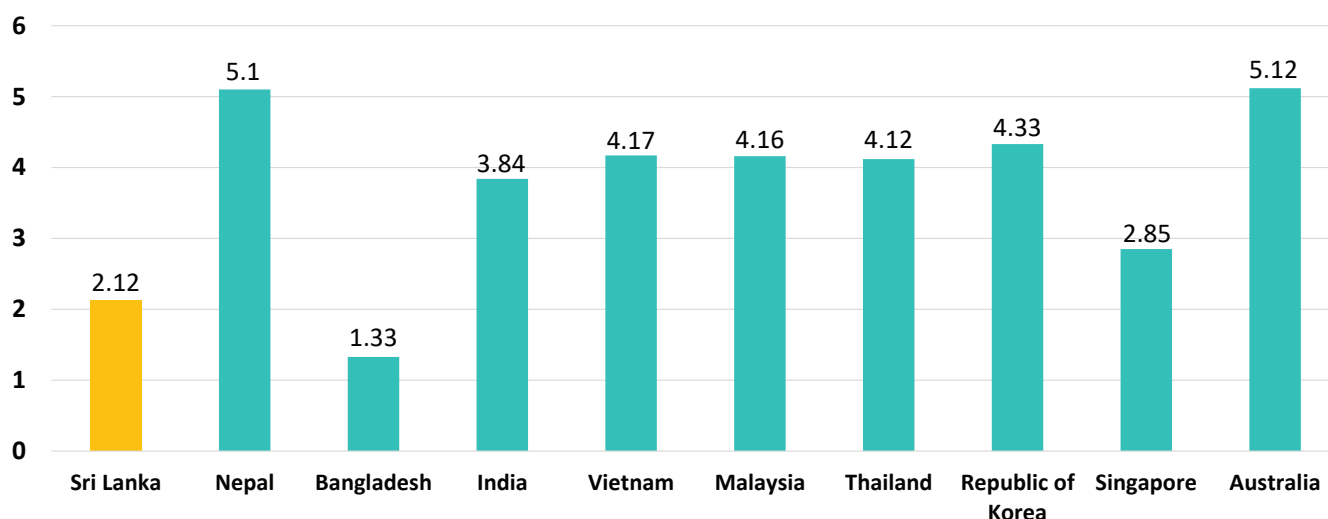
The gross enrolment rate at the tertiary level in Sri Lanka as estimated in 2019 is 21.13%, and it is very low compared to those of advanced countries as well as those of low-income South Asian countries such as India and Bangladesh. The gross enrolment rates in tertiary and post-secondary non-tertiary education in Sri Lanka is less than half that of upper-middle-income countries. It is also lower than many lower-middle-income countries in the Asian region.

The participation in technical and vocational programmes for 15-to-24-year-old is less than 5% in the country. However, this rate is somewhat higher compared to those of other lower-middle-income countries, but it is much lower than that of high-income countries.

3.2. Public Investments in Education

Today's moderate achievements in education in Sri Lanka are due to moderate level public investments made by successive governments to build education infrastructure, train teachers, as well as to provide support to students. As highlighted by many national and international review reports, Sri Lanka's investment as a share of GDP at present is quite small (2.12% as of 2020 data) compared to not only advanced countries such as Australia and Singapore but also to those of low-income countries such as India and Nepal (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Government Expenditure on Education, as a % of GDP

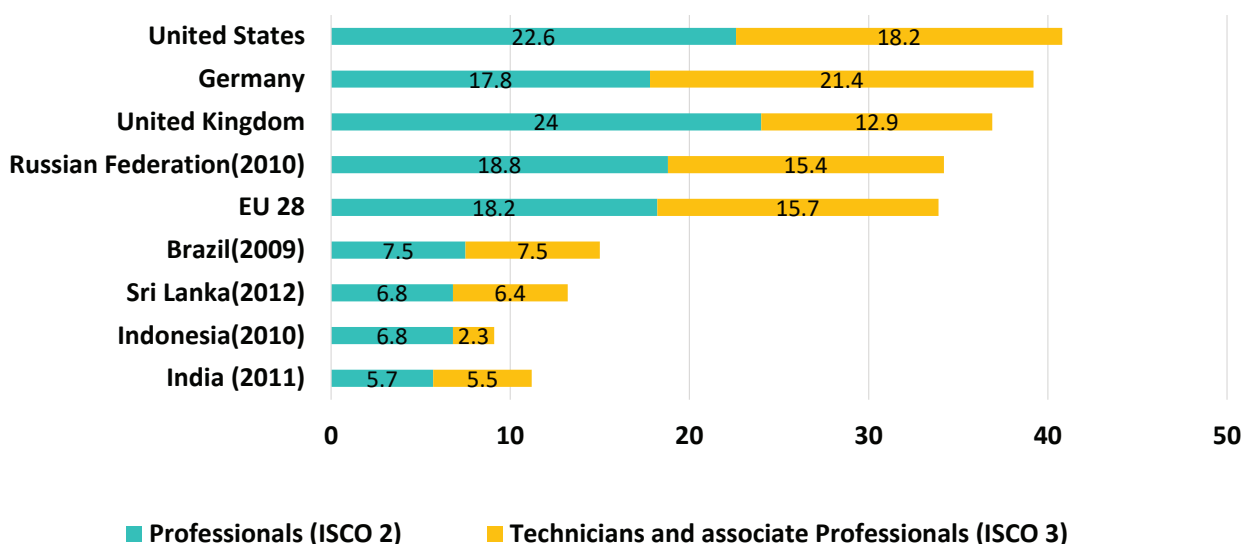


Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2020). September 2020 data update. Retrieved August 3, 2021 from UNESCO Institute for Statistics: <http://data.uis.unesco.org/>

3.3. Proportion of Labour Force in Science and Technology Sector

The proportion of S&T workers in Sri Lanka as a percentage of total employment is 13.2% (*professional 6.8%; technical and associate professional 6.4%*). This is far below the average of the European Union of 33.9% (Figure 3). However, it is better than the proportion of S&T workers in Indonesia and India. However, as both Indonesia and India are countries with very large populations, the number of S&T workers in these countries is larger, although their proportion as a percentage of total employment is smaller. Further, a relatively larger proportion of S&T trained people employed are in teaching (*mostly at the general education level*) and health care services (*medical doctors, paramedical staff, and allied categories*). Only a small proportion are in science and engineering fields (7.7%) or ICT fields (1.9%), and these are the occupation groups that could contribute to research and innovations. This data suggests that the proportion of S&T jobs conducting research and development activities in Sri Lanka is relatively small, and this needs to be increased if the country wishes to enhance its research and innovation capabilities. Therefore, if the country wants to move towards a knowledge-based economy and escape from the ‘middle-income country trap’, new initiatives will need to be taken to improve the tertiary level education in S&T disciplines and fields, both at the university and technical education levels.

Figure 3: Professionals and Technicians as a Percentage of Total Employment



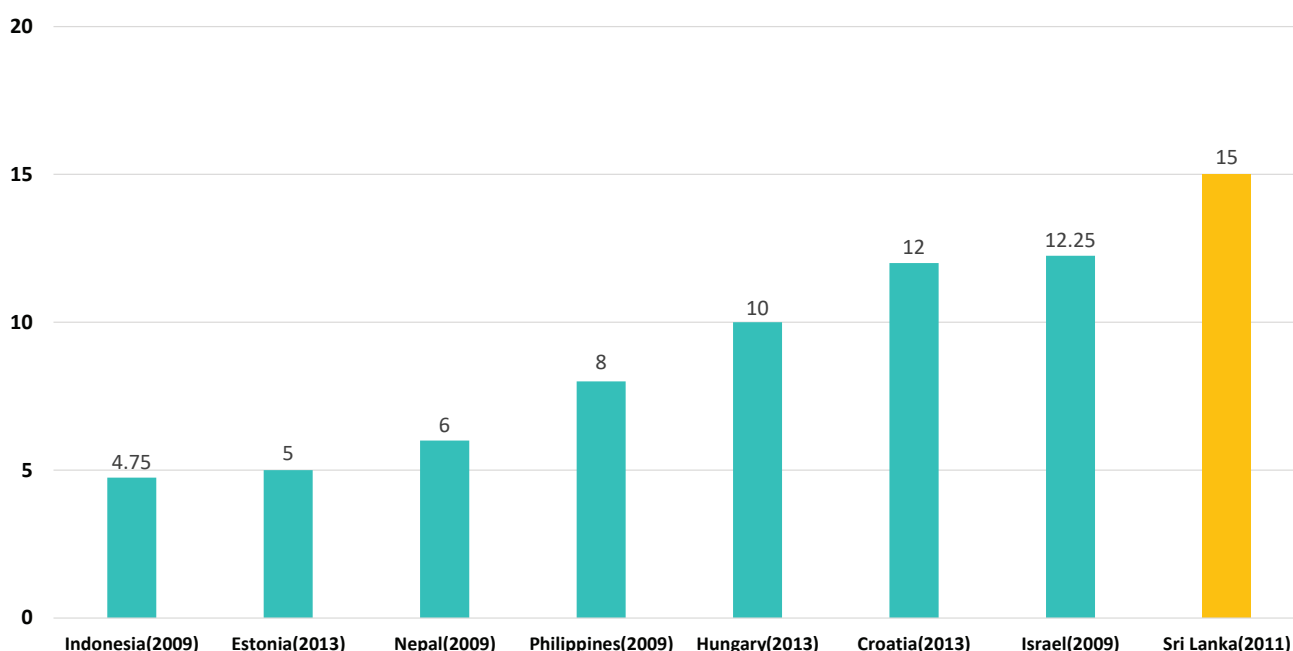
Source: Arunathilake, N. (2012). *Labour Market Characteristics: Thematic Report based on Census of Population and Housing 2012*. UNFPA.

3.4. Alignment between Education Outputs with Labour Market Demands

The limited demand-side information available indicates that there are serious skills gaps in almost all industrial sectors of the country. This skill gap is more acute for highly skilled workers. According to the Labour Force Data in 2016, only 5.3% of employees in the labour force have a degree or higher level of educational qualifications. Further, as the number of skilled workers going abroad for work is increasing, the training institutions in the country need to take into account the needs of the overseas markets (*for migrant workers*) as well as the domestic market. The skills gap is manifested not only as a shortage of skilled persons. Data also revealed that many are employed in occupations for which they do not have sufficient or required qualifications. For example, according to the 2008 International Standard Classification of Occupations, the employee category of professionals is required to have skills at level 4 as they are required to perform tasks “that require complex problem solving, decision making, creativity based on both theoretical and factual knowledge in a specific field”. Thus, the Level 4 category employees require higher-level literacy and numeracy skills, and excellent interpersonal skills and these are mostly imparted at degree or higher-level training. Alternatively, they require to have extensive experience with lower-level qualifications to

engage in such jobs. According to the 2012 Census, about 35.8% of employees categorized as professionals in Sri Lanka were without a tertiary level education. On the flip side, of those with at least a university degree, only 48.5% were in occupations, which required a degree level qualification. Out of the tertiary level educated, 20.9% were doing other types of jobs which are either not relevant to their training or not required a degree level training, and 6.4% were unemployed. What is of more concern is that about 21.7% of degree holders were outside the labour force. The above statistics illustrate that on one hand, Sri Lanka needs more graduates to do jobs that require higher-level skills. On the other hand, the graduates should have the necessary higher-order skills to be gainfully employed in high-skilled occupations. Further, the available educated workforce in Sri Lanka lacks a full range of skills needed for promoting innovation. It has been shown that tertiary level education qualifications together with psychosocial skills are needed to be successful in emerging technology-enabled occupations. This deficiency has also affected the country's ability to attract foreign investments. As shown in Figure 4, the proportion of firms that identify the shortage of adequately skilled workforce as a major or severe constraint in Sri Lanka is much more than those in other middle-income and developing countries. Thus, it appears that both skill shortages and skill mismatches undermine productivity and growth, and thereby the prospects of Sri Lanka joining the group of upper middle-income countries.

Figure 4: Firms Identifying Inadequacy of Skilled Workers



Source: Adapted from Dundar et al. 2014, based on data from World Bank Sector Review Report, 2017

The skills inadequacies that depress national productivity and competitiveness is also reflected in Sri Lanka's current rankings on international indices. The Creative Productivity Index, which measures the proficiency of economies at turning innovation "inputs" such as skills or infrastructure into innovation "outputs" such as patents or scientific publications, ranks Sri Lanka at 19th place out of 24 regional economies in Asia. On the World Economic Forum Global Competitive Index, between 2014 and 2015 Sri Lanka's ranking among more than 170 countries dropped from 65th to 72nd place. Underlying these low and relatively stagnant rankings are, among other factors, problems in higher education and training and in labour market performance.

3.5. Student Learning Outcomes in General Education

Sri Lanka has never participated in any international assessments such as the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) to assess the learning outcomes of general education. However, attempts in this regard were made in 2016 and 2019 by the National Education Research and Evaluation Centre (NEREC) of the University of Colombo. The NEREC had conducted two pilot studies to assess the readiness of Sri Lankan students of Grade 8 for Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) for Mathematics and Test for English as a Foreign Language – Junior (TOEFL Junior) for English. Results of the study, though at a limited scale, have concluded that the learning outcomes in Sri Lanka, at least with respect to Mathematics and English as a Foreign Language do not meet international standards.

3.6. Standards of Higher Education as Measured by University Ranking

Sri Lankan universities do not show up yet in any of the three most popular international rankings namely – Times Higher Education (THE), Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), and Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU). However, many other Asian countries show up relatively well compared to Sri Lanka. Reasons for the lower performance of Sri Lankan Universities in international rankings are low international visibility and low output in research and innovations. However, several Sri Lankan Universities are listed in Webometrics Ranking System, which looks at the internet visibility of higher education institutes.

4. CONCLUSION

The above analysis shows that although the past reforms in the education sector have helped to improve the performance of the sector in terms of improving access to lower levels of education, the enrolment in education at the pre-primary level as well as at higher levels needs significant improvements. In addition, very little is known about the access to special and inclusive education and adult and non-formal education and the performance of those sectors. In addition, the limited information available on the learning outcomes compared to international standards suggests that learning outcomes in Sri Lanka do not meet international standards. In addition, the above analyses also show that Sri Lanka needs to diversify education opportunities (*i.e., expand access to science and mathematics, engineering and technology education*) both at the senior and upper senior secondary and tertiary levels for its citizens. Lastly, all sectors of education need significant modernization and quality improvements to meet the changing demands due to technological advances that are taking place. However, these reforms require substantial government investments as a large part of education from primary to tertiary level is provided by public institutions.

PART II

VISION OF EDUCATION, NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS AND NATIONAL LEARNING COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

1. VISION OF EDUCATION
2. NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS
3. NATIONAL LEARNING COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK (NLCF)
4. HOW TO USE NLCF IN CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Having completed the overview of the national economy and the national education system (NES), the policy drafting team had proceeded to define the Vision of Education, appraise the existing National Education Goals (NEGs), and construct the National Learning Competency Framework (NLCF) that would function as the framework for curricula development in all levels of education and also to set the minimum competency standards for academic qualifications so as to ensure the realization of NEGs and the Vision of Education through education.

1. VISION OF EDUCATION

The Vision of Education exemplifies what the national education system aspires to achieve, and it is phrased as;

“A holistic, progressive and life-long learner for a cohesive, peaceful, patriotic Sri Lankan society attuned to face the local and global challenges”

with the Tagline

“A productive, caring, and patriotic citizen”

It is assumed that the vision is to be realized by achieving the defined national education goals which exemplify what is expected from education.

2. NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS

The NEGs exemplify the role of education in terms of instilling the desired endpoints of national education, and it is expected that the education provisions provided from early childhood education through secondary and tertiary education should contribute to achieving the desired endpoints. The 8 NEGs defined are given in Table 2. The keywords associated with each NEG for the benefit of the general reader are explained in Table 3.

Table 2: National Education Goals

NEG Number	National Education Goals	Condensed Form
NEG 1	Promote the physical, mental, spiritual, socioemotional, and environmental well-being of individuals necessary for a healthy and happy way of life, based on respect for human values	Happy and healthy human being
NEG 2	Develop knowledge, skills, attitudes and human qualities for technological, socio-economic and cultural advancement, in keeping with national needs and global trends	Productive individual
NEG 3	Develop productive individuals with curiosity, critical thinking, problem-solving skills, creativity, and innovativeness	Progressive learner
NEG 4	Promote respect for human rights and laws of the country, while fulfilling duties and obligations in keeping with the norms of social justice and democratic way of life	Respectful and trustworthy person
NEG 5	Develop individuals to manage change and cope with complex and unforeseen situations	Resilient individual

NEG 6	Uphold the nation's cultural and ecological heritage while responding to local and global challenges	Culturally fortified ambassador
NEG 7	Promote a mindful and self-conscious learner to enhance the capacity for learning to learn	Reflective learner
NEG 8	Develop a patriotic Sri Lankan citizen fostering national cohesion, national integrity and national unity while respecting cultural diversity	Patriotic citizen

Table 3: NEGs and Key Words Associated with NEGs are Explained

NEG	NEG Explained
NEG 1: Promote the spiritual, socioemotional, physical, mental and environmental well-being of individuals necessary for a healthy and happy way of life, based on respect for human values	<p>Physical well-being: Optimally maintain the body and well-being through healthy habits, dietary practices and physical exercise.</p> <p>Mental well-being: A state of mind that helps one to cope with daily stresses of life productively and with contentment.</p> <p>Spiritual well-being: Ability to find purpose and meaning in life using a variety of religious and non-religious methods.</p> <p>Socioemotional well-being: Ability to initiate, cultivate, and maintain healthy and meaningful relationships with others (<i>parents, relatives, friends, etc.</i>) while adjusting and monitoring one's own emotions and feelings such as empathy, joy, excitement, surprise, anger, contempt, fear, etc.</p> <p>Environmental well-being: Ability to interact with nature and one's own surroundings necessary for harmonious coexistence.</p>
NEG 2: Develop knowledge, skills, attitudes and human qualities for technological, socio-economic and cultural advancement in keeping with national needs and global trends	<p>Knowledge: Developmentally appropriate understanding on inter-related concepts and principles.</p> <p>Skills: Performing a task using manual dexterity, technological applications and related soft skills.</p> <p>Attitude: An opinion or viewpoint regarding a person, object, situation or concept, usually manifested as a result of the values one holds.</p> <p>Human qualities: Qualities that define who we are as human beings including honesty, integrity, courage, self-awareness, and wholeheartedness.</p> <p>Technological advancement: Application of scientific findings and innovations to facilitate human activities</p> <p>Socio-economic advancement: Application of knowledge on society and societal factors and resources to promote human progress and the economic standards of living of a country's population.</p>

	<p>Cultural advancement: Promotion of intellectual, cultural, and material development in human society through religion, aesthetics and art, and sciences.</p>
<p>NEG 3: Develop productive individuals with curiosity, critical thinking, problem-solving skills, creativity, and innovativeness</p>	<p>Curiosity: Desire to learn or know about anything and everything.</p> <p>Critical thinking: Sharpness of mental functions that lead to a clear and rational understanding of the logical connection between ideas, and the ability to weigh the pros and cons of a given situation with an open, unbiased, argumentative mind.</p> <p>Problem-solving skills: Ability to break down an issue into its component parts and propose ways of understanding it or identifying, prioritizing, and selecting alternatives to address it.</p> <p>Creativity: Ability to perceive the world in different ways to produce novel ideas or products of their own and disseminate them appropriately.</p> <p>Innovativeness: A state of mind that is attributable to the recognition and active pursuit of opportunities for inventing or adapting unique innovative and creative ideas or products.</p>
<p>NEG 4: Promote respect for human rights and laws of the country, while fulfilling duties and obligations in keeping with the norms of social justice and democratic way of life</p>	<p>Human rights: Moral principles or norms and ethical codes that describe prime standards of human behaviour and conduct that ensure the individual's right to life with dignity.</p> <p>Laws of the country: System of rules put in place to regulate the behaviour and conduct of citizens, and penalties that will be inflicted or imposed upon any breach of such rules.</p> <p>Duty: What a person owes to fellow human beings as a fact of nature in order to act in a responsible and accountable manner.</p> <p>Obligation: Conditions and responsibilities that are being imposed by contract or custom.</p> <p>Norms of social justice: Accepted and shared values (<i>though mostly unwritten</i>) those that are upheld within a community that ensure fair and just relations between the individual and society, such as acknowledgement of fundamental and human rights of all people.</p> <p>Democratic way of life: A system of living that places a high value on individual freedom while respecting the majority view for the greater good of the society.</p>
<p>NEG 5: Develop individuals to manage change and cope with complex and unforeseen situations</p>	<p>Managing change: Ability to handle the stresses associated with a situation that is unpredictable, novel or liable to alter constantly.</p> <p>Complex situation: A situation in which, for any number of reasons, the level of understanding that an observer has of the situation is vastly incomplete with many competing solutions that lead to different (<i>and even contradictory</i>) results.</p>

	<p>Unforeseen situation: A situation that one did not expect to happen.</p>
<p>NEG 6: Uphold the nation’s cultural and ecological heritage while responding to local and global challenges</p>	<p>Cultural heritage: An expression of the ways of living developed by a community mostly under the influence of religious beliefs and practices and passed on from generation to generation, including customs, practices, places, objects, artistic expressions and values.</p> <p>Ecological heritage: The processes that govern the biosphere, and that must be preserved and passed on to future generations.</p> <p>Local and global challenges: The demands placed on an individual or society to provide solutions to grave problems that affect either a given country/region or the entire world.</p>
<p>NEG 7: Promote a mindful and self-conscious learner to enhance the capacity for learning to learn</p>	<p>A mindful learner: One who is able to relate openly and flexibly to the diversities and inconsistencies of experiences by promoting deeper awareness of one’s surroundings and actions.</p> <p>A self-conscious learner: A person with a heightened sense of awareness of the process that leads to an expansion of his/her own knowledge and abilities.</p> <p>Learning to learn: Ability to pursue and persist in activities leading to the enhancement of knowledge, skills and attitudes, and to organize one’s own learning both individually and in groups, by critically reflecting on one’s own deficiencies.</p>
<p>NEG 8: Develop a patriotic Sri Lankan citizen fostering national cohesion, national integrity and national unity while respecting cultural diversity</p>	<p>A patriotic citizen: A citizen respects his/her country of birth and is committed to his/her motherland in the first instance or for its own sake, but not as a consequence of his/her commitment to something else.</p> <p>National cohesion: Living and working together within diverse societies and individuals to achieve their potential.</p> <p>National integrity: The extent to which a country projects itself as a united and undivided force to safeguard steadfastly its interests.</p> <p>National unity: Living together of people of all ethnicities, religions, castes and languages in a country, harmoniously.</p> <p>Cultural diversity: Existence of a variety of diverse cultural groups within a society and the acknowledgement of the richness that such existence brings into the society.</p>

Source: Author’s illustration.

3. NATIONAL LEARNING COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK (NLCF)

It is envisaged the education policy of the country should facilitate the attainment of the NEGs and thereby the Vision of Education. This could only be achieved by incorporating the NEGs into the curricula of educational programmes, offered at various stages of education. Since curricula are developed using learning outcomes rather than goals, the said NEGs need to be turned into their corresponding abilities or learning outcomes. Thus, having defined the Vision of Education and NEGs, the NEC has proceeded to construct a broad set of abilities that would function as the pathway to realizing the NEGs. These abilities are a set of cognitive, psychomotor and affective attributes and skills (hard and soft skills) and they are termed National Learning Competency Domains (NLCDs). They are essential for an individual to succeed in his/her personal life. In order to facilitate the learner acquiring and perfecting the competencies progressively, the NLCDs are further customized to suit the different levels of education, from early childhood through primary, junior secondary, senior secondary, upper senior secondary/collegiate, undergraduate to postgraduate education. These customized level-specific NLCDs are termed National Learning Competencies (NLCs) or national learning outcomes. The matrix of NLCDs and NLCs are collectively termed National Learning Competency Framework (NLCF).

Section 3.1 and 3.2 provide a detailed explanation of the NLCDs, and the relationship of NLCDs with NEGs, and the NLCF.

3.1. National Learning Competency Domains (NLCDs)

The NLCDs were constructed by adapting the twelve categories of competency domains or learning outcomes of national importance that were adopted in 2015 when developing the Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework (SLQF). The SLQF was constructed in keeping with other qualification frameworks introduced by many countries worldwide for qualification holders from senior secondary level education to doctoral level, and these were identified as (i) Subject/Theoretical Knowledge, (ii) Practical Knowledge and Skills, (iii) Communication, (iv) Teamwork and Leadership, (v) Creativity and Problem-Solving, (vi) Managerial and Entrepreneurship Skills, (vii) Information Usage and Management, (viii) Networking and Social Skills, (ix) Adaptability and Flexibility, (x) Attitudes, Values and Professionalism, (xi) Vision for Life, and (xii) Updating Self/Lifelong Learning.

A popular model used as a guiding document by many countries of the world for preparing learning competency and qualification frameworks is the P21 Framework developed by the United States of America-based organization, Partnership for 21st Century Learning. According to this model, the cornerstone of becoming a successful learner at any age boils down to the following four skills, known as “4Cs”: (1) Creativity, (2) Critical thinking, (3) Communication, and (4) Collaboration. In order to ensure international recognition for Sri Lankan qualifications, the above mentioned 12 categories of learning outcomes have been mapped with the three components or domains of P21 Framework, namely, i) Learning and Innovation Skills, ii) Information, Media and Technology Skills, and iii) Life and Career Skills. The 12 categories of learning outcomes stated in the SLQF have also been grouped into four categories of outcome domains: knowledge; skills; attitudes; and mindset and paradigm. This classification is termed as **K-SAM** model, and it is widely used in the Sri Lankan context.

Knowledge: what the learners know

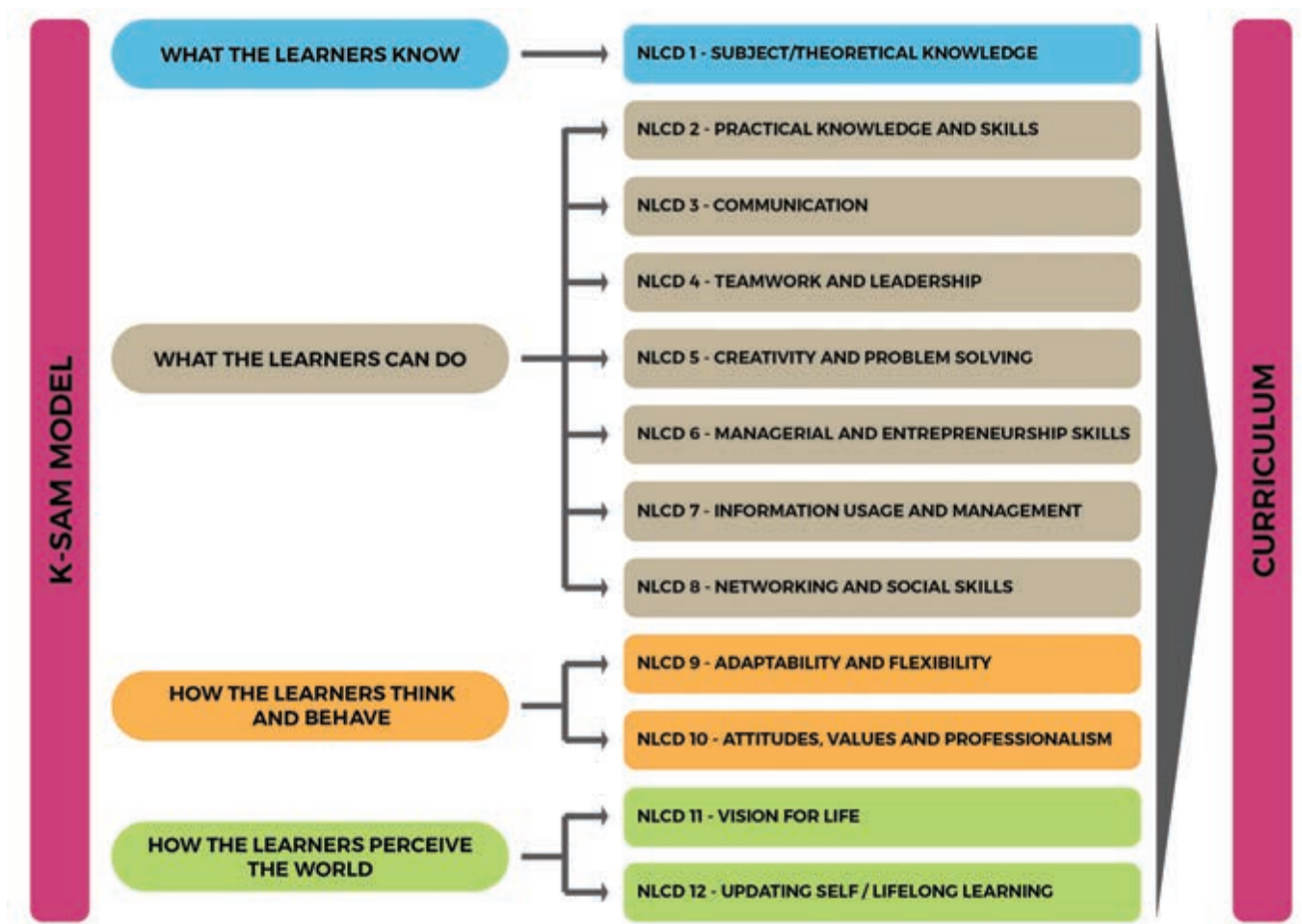
Skills: what the learners can do

Attitudes, Values, Professionalism, and Vision for Life: how the learners think and behave

Mindset and Paradigm: how the learners perceive the world

The categorization of the NLCDs according to the principal K-SAM components is depicted in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Categorization of NLCDs according to the Principles of K-SAM Model



Source: Author's illustration

It is assumed that the NLCDs should be incorporated into curriculum development at all levels in the country's education system to serve them as the foundation to achieving the NEGs. This would make sure the learners could progressively achieve what are embodied in NEGs, by the time they exit the school system and tertiary education institutions. Also, this would ensure the smooth transition from one level of learning to the next level of learning. With this approach, the consistency across learning in achieving the expected abilities and attributes from the early childhood education and development (ECED) level to doctoral level is guaranteed.

Explanations for each of the 12 categories of learning competency domains for the benefit of the users in general education are given in the following table (Table 4).

Table 4: Explanation for 12 NLCDs in Relation to General Education

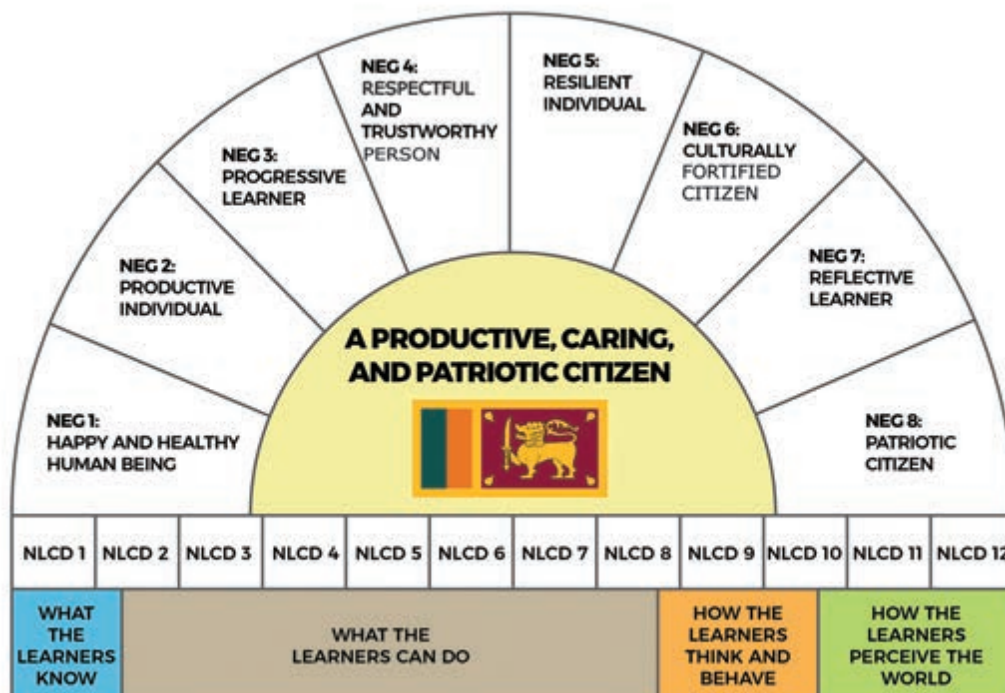
NLCD	Explanation
1. Subject/Theoretical Knowledge	<p>Subject knowledge: Information, understanding and skills specific to the content of a subject area.</p> <p>Theoretical knowledge: Developmentally appropriate sets of inter-related concepts and principles that propose a rational and testable explanation about a phenomenon (<i>i.e., an observable fact or event</i>) pertaining to a content area.</p>
2. Practical Knowledge and Skills	Ability to utilize and/or experience developmentally appropriate skills through modalities such as field studies, practical or laboratory classes, projects, etc. Usually, such utilization and experience help enhance the understanding of subject/theoretical knowledge and solve real-world problems.
3. Communication	Developmentally appropriate ability to express facts, opinions or/and ideas clearly using verbal, non-verbal, written or any other modalities of expression, to share information and ideas in a manner understandable to a recipient.
4. Teamwork and Leadership	<p>Teamwork: Ability to work in a group of persons to share responsibilities through supporting and complementing each other, in order to achieve an agreed common task/goal.</p> <p>Leadership: Ability to provide direction, cohesion and inspiration to others.</p>
5. Creativity and Problem Solving Skills	<p>Creativity: Ability to perceive the world in different ways, develop creations of their own and disseminate it appropriately.</p> <p>Problem-solving skills: Ability to break down an issue into its component parts and propose ways of understanding or identifying, prioritizing, and selecting alternatives.</p>
6. Managerial and Entrepreneurship Skills	<p>Managerial ability: Ability to control, handle or balance a group of persons/items or a situation in an acceptable manner.</p> <p>Entrepreneurship skills: Creativity and capacity to identify and pursue opportunities beyond resources that may lead to initiatives and innovations.</p>
7. Information Usage and Management	<p>Information usage: Ability to utilize information from different sources such as teachers, peers, textbooks, websites, etc.</p> <p>Information management: Developmentally appropriate ability to record, store, maintain, retrieve and share data methodically, both electronically and/or in any other applicable way.</p>
8. Networking and Social Skills	<p>Networking: Ability to connect and remain connected with people.</p> <p>Social skills: Developmentally appropriate abilities that are helpful to function smoothly and effectively in society, without unnecessary conflicts.</p>
9. Adaptability and Flexibility	<p>Adaptability: Ability to adjust to fit into various circumstances and situations.</p> <p>Flexibility: Ability to be bent without being broken or without breaking laws, rules, norms, etc.</p> <p>In general, these two terms refer to an ability that helps accommodate others' situations, views, opinions or ideas to complement one's own, with or without changing/modifying one's own. It is related to being able to respect diversity.</p>

<p>10. Attitudes, Values and Professionalism</p>	<p>Attitude: An opinion or viewpoint regarding a person, object, situation or concept. Learning should promote positive attitudes which should not lead to any kind of disruption to society or uneasiness to others. A high level of emotional intelligence is a core requirement for the latter.</p> <p>Value: An internal system of thinking that attaches worth to certain ideas/phenomena but not to certain others. Values make one steadfastly hold such ideas/phenomena dear to one’s heart. Usually, it is the values that manifest as attitudes.</p> <p>Professionalism: Developmentally appropriate formal behaviour abiding by the rules applicable to a given situation. Such behaviour is possible only if a person reflects on one’s own action and integrates many of the above competencies in a useful way into a composite act, which should be delivered in a skilful and consummate manner.</p>
<p>11. Vision for Life</p>	<p>A frame of mind, i.e., mindset, that results in a broad plan/aspiration based on what you want to be in the future to direct oneself in all/most present and future activities. Simply put, one’s own ambition or desire in life that will guide one’s decisions and actions, based on the paradigms that one sets for oneself.</p>
<p>12. Updating Self/ Lifelong Learning</p>	<p>Developmentally appropriate ability to learn on one’s own initiative with or without the help of formal teachers or a formal curriculum, using self-selected learning material/ methods and/or day-to-day activities, after reflecting on one’s own learning needs.</p>

Source: Author’s illustration.

The link between NLCDs and NEGs is explained in detail in Part II of the Full Text of NEPF (2020-2030). The following graphical representation (Figure 6) shows how the twelve NLCDs are expected to facilitate achieving the Vision of Education through eight National Educational Goals (NEGs).

Figure 6: Composite Diagram of NLCDs and K-SAM Model, and NEGs and Vision of Education (depicting how NLCDs facilitate achieving Vision of Education through eight NEGs).



Source: Author’s illustration.

3.2. Level-specific National Learning Competencies (NLCs)

As defined elsewhere, the matrix of the National Learning Competency Domains (NLCDs) and level-specific National Learning Competencies/Outcomes (NLCs) is labelled as the National Learning Competency Framework (NLCF). These level-specific learning competencies/outcomes or level descriptors define what should be the minimal competency profile of a student at the respective stages of learning. Thus, all curricula and lesson contents and pedagogy and assessments of respective levels of education must be constructively aligned with level-specific learning outcomes, and therefore, the NLCF shall function as the spine or backbone for curricula development for the provision of education at all levels of learning. A brief description of NLCF is given below in Table 5, and the detailed version of NLCF and the alignment of NLCF with the Sri Lanka Qualification Framework (SLQF) adopted in higher education and the National Vocational Qualification Framework adopted in technical and vocational education is explained in Part II of the Full Text of NEPF (2020-2030).

Table 5: National Learning Competency Framework (NLCF) for Early Childhood Education and Development and General Education (5 Levels)

K-SAM Elements	National Learning Competency Domains (NLCDs)	Learning Outcomes/National Learning Competency Statements (NLCs)				
		Early Childhood Education & Development (3-5 years old)	Primary Grades 1-5 (5-9 years old)	Junior Secondary Grades 6-9 (10-13 years old)	Senior Secondary Grades 10 and 11 (14-16 years old)	Upper Senior Secondary/ Collegiate Grades 12 and 13 (16-19 years old)
What the learners know	1. Subject/Theoretical Knowledge	Describe an object/process in their own words when engaged in a particular activity. Collect relevant information that could be applied within a theme.	Describe basic, straightforward phenomena/problems in their own words under guidance. Collect information that could be applied within a theme, under guidance.	Explain basic, straightforward phenomena/problems accurately in their own words independently. Collect and apply relevant information within a subject area.	Explain how basic knowledge can be applied to straightforward phenomena/problems under guidance. Interpret relevant information within the subject area.	Explain simple phenomena/problems using fundamental theories within the subject area. Interpret non-routine information within the subject area.
What the learners can do	2. Practical Knowledge and Skills	Demonstrate age-appropriate skills in activities within a theme.	Demonstrate age-appropriate skills under the guidance within a theme.	Identify and use appropriate skills under the guidance within the subject area.	Select and use appropriate skills and methods under the guidance within the subject area.	Select and use appropriate skills, methods, and procedures within the subject area.

What the learners can do	3.Communication	Listen attentively and respond appropriately verbally and non-verbally. Express ideas, within a theme verbally, nonverbally or through drawing.	Listen attentively and present ideas verbally, non-verbally or in writing logically, within a theme.	Listen attentively and present concepts verbally, non-verbally or in writing logically, within a subject area.	Listen attentively and respond to simple arguments verbally, non-verbally or in writing with reasons, within the subject area and applications in living environment.	Listen attentively and respond to arguments verbally, non-verbally or in writing with reasons, within the subject area, and in a given social context.
What the learners can do	4. Teamwork and Leadership	Fulfil responsibilities under the guidance within a team.	Fulfil responsibilities under the guidance within a team.	Fulfil responsibilities under guidance and accept others' points of view.	Fulfil responsibilities under the guidance and tolerate others' points of view while taking initiative when needed.	Fulfil responsibilities and respect others' points of view while converting an initiative into action.
What the learners can do	5. Creativity and Problem Solving	Draw and act creatively and imaginatively to find solutions to simple, everyday problems through free activities.	Read, write and act creatively, and imaginatively to find solutions to simple, everyday problems through free activities.	Read, analyse and write coherent descriptions and narratives, and find solutions to simple problems integrating subject knowledge.	Read, analyse and write coherent descriptions and narratives, and find solutions to problems within the subject area and within the family and school environment.	Develop initial arguments in accordance with basic theories and concepts of humanities or scientific areas of study. Demonstrate creativity and problem-solving at the community level.
What the learners can do	6. Managerial and Entrepreneurship Skills	Initiate/ participate in simple imaginative social activities within the classroom.	Plan and implement simple imaginative social activities within the classroom.	Plan and implement learning and social activities confidently, beyond the classroom.	Plan day to day activities and prioritize the project activities managing the relevant resources efficiently and effectively to ensure better returns.	Plan small projects and prioritize the project activities and implement the event managing the relevant resources in participatory manner, efficiently and effectively to ensure better returns.

What the learners can do	7. Information Usage and Management	Demonstrate increasing ability to receive formal and informal age-appropriate information through different sources and comprehend the same.	Demonstrate increasing ability to receive formal and informal age-appropriate information through different sources and comprehend the same.	Demonstrate increasing ability to receive formal and informal age-appropriate information through different sources and comprehend, and manage such information.	Demonstrate increasing ability to receive formal and informal age-appropriate information through different sources and comprehend, manage and utilize such information.	Demonstrate increasing ability to receive formal and informal age-appropriate information through different sources and comprehend, manage, utilize and convey such information.
What the learners can do	8. Networking and Social Skills	Connect with peers collectively and amicably for a given purpose within one's own social environment.	Connect with peers collectively and amicably for a given purpose within one's own social environment.	Initiate relationships and contribute as a useful member within one's own social environment.	Initiate relationships and actively contribute as a useful member within one's own social environment.	Value and initiate relationships, select and proactively contribute to activities of interest in appropriate social environments, within one's own and beyond.
How the learners think and behave	9. Adaptability and Flexibility	Demonstrate increasing ability to adapt to changing situations.	Demonstrate the ability to change one's own way of doing things in relation to changing environment.	Demonstrate the ability to change one's own way of doing things with reasons, in relation to changing environment and circumstances.	Demonstrate the ability to change one's own views and ways of doing things rationally in response to a given situation considering the environment changes with time and circumstances.	Demonstrate the ability to change one's own views and decide on how best to change in a given situation considering the environment changes with time and circumstances.

How the learners think and behave	10. Attitudes, Values and Professionalism	Demonstrate increasing ability to perform small tasks of sharing and caring. Express a sense of right and wrong by expressing what is right/wrong in a given situation.	Perform small tasks of sharing and caring. Identify what is right and what is wrong in a given situation. Maintain punctuality and dress appropriately.	Recognize the importance of caring for others' needs and act accordingly. Identify with reasons what is right and what is wrong in a given situation. Maintain punctuality, dress appropriately, and behave orderly.	Recognize the importance of caring for others' needs and act accordingly. Select the appropriate response for a given situation based on a system of values. Maintain punctuality, dress appropriately, behave orderly and abide by the rules.	Demonstrate empathy towards others. Exercise personal responsibility in selecting tasks performed, based on a system of values. Maintain punctuality, dress appropriately, behave orderly and abide by the rules.
How the learners perceive the world	11. Vision for Life	Express who one wants to be through different modes (<i>imitating, drawing, etc.</i>).	Imagine and express who one wants to be while recognizing the many options one can select.	Identify one's own passions and dream of who one wants to be in future.	Recognize one's own strengths and weaknesses and his/her contributory role in the society and identify where one wants to be in the future and plans towards it.	Broadly identify where one wants to be and develop long term goals and start implementing them under the guidance.
How the learners perceive the world	12. Updating Self / Lifelong Learning	Initiate an age-appropriate task and continue it to completion.	Initiate a short-term activity plan to achieve a specific task.	Initiate and implement a medium-term activity plan to achieve specific tasks.	Extract learning from academic and life activities according to a plan.	Select learning needs and engage in necessary continuous learning and training with self-directedness.

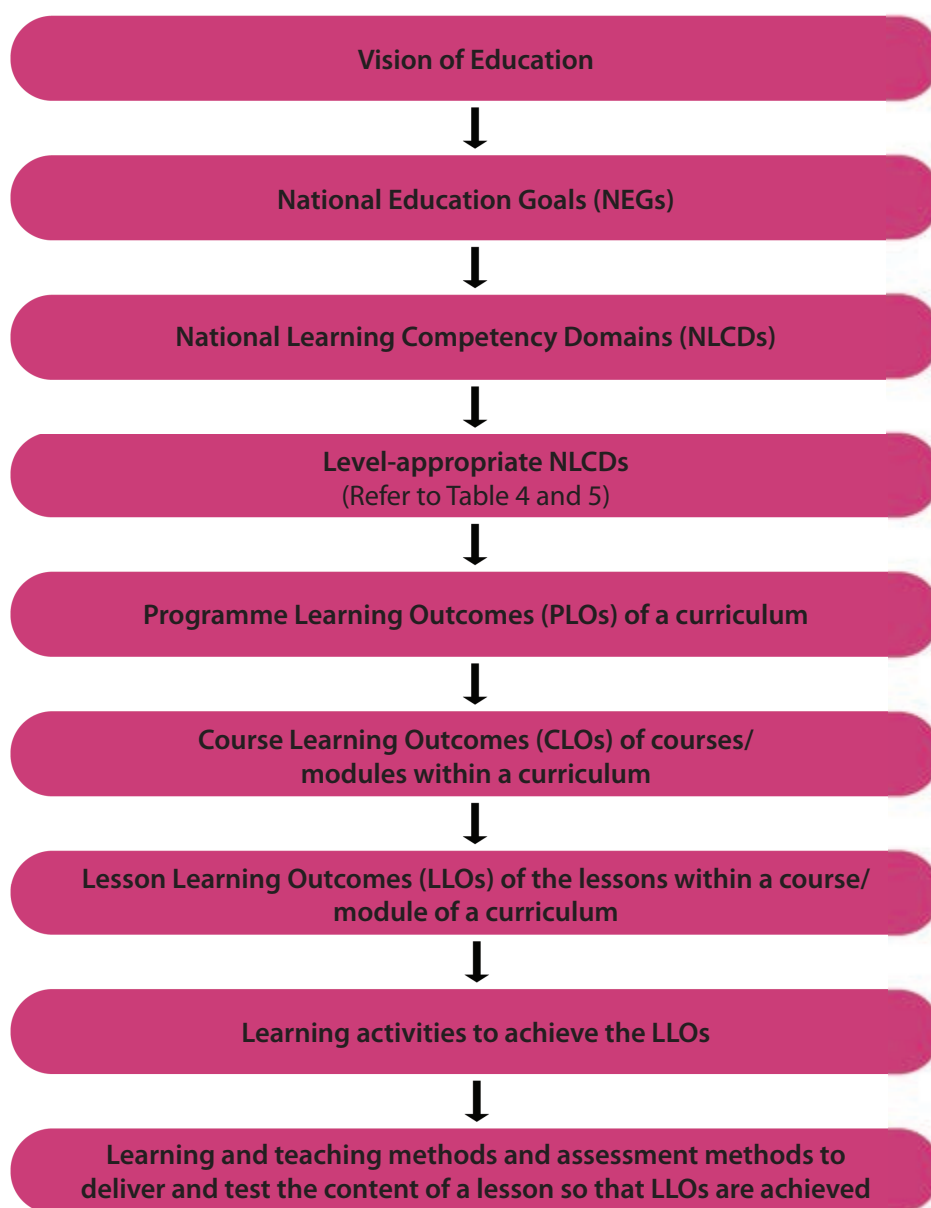
Source: Author's illustration.

4. HOW TO USE THE NLCF IN CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

The National Education Policy Framework (NEPF) is the official communique that delineates the education policy of the State. A major component of the NEPF (2020-2030) is the NLCF. It is an exposition of the National Learning Competency Domains (NLCDs) and the NLCs (or level-specific learning competencies/outcomes or level-specific NLCDs) at different levels of education. It also explains how these components are interconnected. If the Vision of Education is to be realized, these components should be translated to core educational practices. This translation implies that the NEGs should be converted to more learnable, teachable, and assessable abilities and attributes. These abilities and attributes are given as 12 NLCDs, and they are customized as level-specific learning competencies/outcomes from ECED to collegiate-level education for constructing the NLCF.

The key document that guides the on-ground educational practice is the curriculum adopted by educational institutes. The most basic building block of a curriculum is a lesson. It is the lessons that are delivered to the learners. Typically, a lesson lasts for either a few minutes or a few hours and consists of learning and teaching activities. A collection of lessons thus forms a more aggregate component of a curriculum, namely, a course unit/module. All these aggregate components will collectively form a composite curriculum, which is called a study programme curriculum. This goes to show that a curriculum has 3 basic hierarchical layers - study programme, the course/module, and the lesson. This means that the learning outcomes should be specified at each of the above layers of a curriculum, i.e., programme learning outcomes (PLOs), course/module learning outcomes (CLOs), and lesson learning outcomes (LLOs). This approach conforms to the principles of outcome-based education, student-centered learning, and constructive alignment. The following diagram (Figure 7) provides guidance to practitioners on how the key components and stipulations of the NLCF can be used in curriculum development. More detailed explanation on the use of NLCF in curriculum development is given in Part II of the Full Text of NEPF (2020-2030).

Figure 7: Steps of Curriculum Development Process using NLCF



PART III

AIMS AND DIRECTIVE PRINCIPLES OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY FRAMEWORK

1. **AIMS OF NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY FRAMEWORK**
2. **GUIDING PRINCIPLES CORRESPONDING TO THE AIMS OF NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY FRAMEWORK**
3. **CORE AREAS AND ELEMENTS OF NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY FRAMEWORK**
4. **DIRECTIVE PRINCIPLES CORRESPONDING TO THE CORE AREAS OF NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY FRAMEWORK**

Having completed Step II of the policy planning process, the NEC policy drafting team has then proceeded to define the Aims and Guiding Principles of National Education Policy, Core Areas and Elements of National Education System, and Directive Principles of NEPF (2020-2030).

While the **Vision of Education and NEGs** running as the primary dictates, the policy formulation process has to embrace and comply with all the relevant constitutional dictates prescribed in the Constitution and universal principles that are laid down in international accords and charters. Hence the NEC policy formulation process has developed a set of **Aims of NEPF** and identified the corresponding **Guiding Principles** that encompasses all the constitutional dictates and universal principles as well as the ethical and moral standards and principles that the country is aspiring to uphold. Having defined the aims and guiding principles of NEPF, the NEC has proceeded to define the **Core Areas** and corresponding **Key Elements of the National Education System (NES)** and the **Directive Principles of the National Education Policy**. The core areas and corresponding elements are considered as **Criteria** while the directive principles are considered as the **Standards** of the National Education Policy Framework (2020-2030). **Core Areas** are the key aspects of the NES. These aspects must operate at an optimal level for the NES to function. **Key Elements** are the fundamental constituents of a given core area. They must be satisfied or fulfilled or addressed to achieve success in a given core area and in education in general. **Directive Principles** are the principal policies of the Government that influence and determine the sector-specific policy directives and strategic activities, and other matters relating to education.

Aims of the NEPF, Guiding Principles, Core areas and Element, and Directive Principles are given below. And the detailed version is given in Part III of the Full Text of the NEPF (2020-2030).

1. AIMS OF NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY FRAMEWORK

The NEC has formulated six Aims that the NEPF (2020-2030) envisions to achieve and these Aims are:

- Aim 1: Education System that Assures Universal Access to Education
- Aim 2: Education System that Ensures Equity and Inclusiveness
- Aim 3: Education System that Delivers Quality Education Matching with International Benchmarks
- Aim 4: Education System that Aims at All-Round Personality Development
- Aim 5: Education System that Nurtures National Identity and Unity in Diversity
- Aim 6: Education System with Adequate Funding, Quality Physical and Human Resources and Greater Accountability and Efficiency

Having defined the Aims of NEPF, the NEC has proceeded to identify the relevant constitutional dictates and universal principles prescribed by the international accords and charters as well the ethical and moral standards and principles that the country aspires to uphold for constructing the corresponding Guiding Principles (GPs).

2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES CORRESPONDING TO THE AIMS OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY FRAMEWORK

Aim 1 - Education System that Assures Universal Access to Education

Guiding Principles: Every Sri Lankan child, regardless of wealth, ethnicity, geographical location, or social background, deserves equal access to education that will enable him/her to achieve his or her true potential. Building upon the principle of 'Education for All', a constituent of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Sri Lankan education system aspires to ensure universal access and full enrolment of all children from pre-school through to the senior secondary and upper senior secondary/collegiate levels, and then into tertiary education to pursue a chosen education and career pathway.

Aim 2 - Education System that Ensures Equity and Inclusiveness

Guiding Principles: Sri Lankan education system, as envisioned by the Sustainable Development Goals (*Goal 4 - Quality Education: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning*), aspires to deliver the best possible education to every student. Equity and inclusiveness should be ensured by the need-based distribution of learning opportunities, resources, and required funds across all provinces. This is to ensure all students, regardless of who their parents are or where they study, or their disabilities, will be equipped with the knowledge and skills that they need to build their own future.

Aim 3 - Education System that Delivers Quality Education Matching with International Benchmarks

Guiding Principles: Every Sri Lankan student deserves the opportunity to receive a quality education that is uniquely Sri Lankan, in conformity with the NEC prescribed national education goals and basic learning competency domains, and comparable to those of the high-performing education systems in the world. Quality education includes many dimensions: learners who are healthy, well-nourished, and ready to participate in teaching and learning, and supported in the learning process by their families and communities; learning environments that are healthy, safe, protective, gender-sensitive and provide adequate resources and facilities; learning content that is reflected in relevant curricula and materials for the acquisition of basic skills, especially in the areas of literacy, numeracy and skills for life, and knowledge in such areas as gender, health, nutrition, and peace; learning processes through which trained teachers use outcome-based, student-centered teaching and learning approaches in well-managed classrooms and schools and skillful assessment to facilitate learning and reduce disparities; and learning outcomes that encompass knowledge, skills, and attitudes, and are linked to national goals for education.

Aim 4 - Education System that Aims at All-Round Personality Development

Guiding Principles: As synopsised in NEGs formulated by the NEC in 2020, the Sri Lanka education system shall focus on the holistic education that aims at the fullest possible development of the person, encouraging individuals to become the very best or finest that they can be and enabling them to experience all they can in life and reach their goals (*NEG 1 to 8*). This shall cover not only, cognitive development, but also the emotional development, physical development, and social development of children. Every student must be provided a solid combination of knowledge, thinking skills, leadership skills, bilingual proficiency, ethics and spirituality, and national identity, which are critical in preparing students to succeed and thrive in an increasingly globalized world. The education system shall focus not only on the importance of knowledge, but also on developing critical, creative, and innovative thinking skills; leadership skills; proficiency in national languages, Sinhala and Tamil, and the English language; character and values; and a strong sense of national identity. These elements would guarantee all students in their adulthood would contribute meaningfully to their families, to society, and to the nation.

Aim 5 - Education System that nurtures National Identity and Unity in Diversity

Guiding Principles: The Sri Lankan education system, as summed up in NEG 8 – *Develop a patriotic Sri Lanka citizen fostering national cohesion, national integrity, and national unity while respecting cultural diversity* – must enlighten every child about Sri Lanka’s rich history, culture, values, art and music and about its ethnic and religious diversity. It must impart an unshakeable sense of national identity, tied to the principles of unity in diversity which is essential for Sri Lanka’s future development in order to inculcate love and allegiance for their birthplace. Every student shall identify themselves proudly as Sri Lankans, irrespective of ethnicity, religious beliefs, socio-economic status or geographical location. Achieving this patriotism and pluralism requires a strong sense of inclusiveness, acquired through learning to understand and tolerate differences, to accept and respect others, as well as to live together and embrace the ethnic, religious, and social diversity prevailing within the Sri Lankan society.

Aim 6 - Education System with Adequate Funding, Quality Physical and Human Resources, and Greater Accountability and Efficiency

Guiding Principles: The State strives towards an incremental increase in investment in education to enhance the adequacy of physical resources and the quality of teachers and improve their service conditions and would endeavour to improve governance and management and improve accountability and efficiency that ensures prudent deployment and use of public resources to sustain an education system which is adequately resourced, responsible, accountable and efficient so as to maximize student learning outcomes within the given budget.

3. CORE AREAS AND ELEMENTS OF NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY FRAMEWORK

Based on 6 Aims and corresponding Guiding Principles, the following 12 core areas and core-area specific policy elements (*criteria*) are identified as indicated in Table 6 as the basis for formulating the NEPF.

Table 6: Core Areas and Policy Elements of National Education Policy Framework

No.	Core Area	Policy Element
AIM 1 - UNIVERSAL ACCESS		
1	Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Access to Early Childhood Education- Access to Primary and Secondary Education- Access to Higher Education- Access to Technical and Vocational Education and Training- Access to Non-Formal Education
AIM 2 - EQUITY & INCLUSIVENESS		
2	Equity and Inclusiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Access to education regardless of gender, race, religion or social status, geographical location, or disabilities- Education for differently-abled students- Vocational Education for school dropouts- Non-Formal Education for school dropouts and adults

AIM 3 - QUALITY EDUCATION

3	Quality Education - Learners and Learning environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learner preparedness - healthy, well-nourished, and ready to participate and learn - Parents' commitment and community support - Learning environments that are healthy, safe, protective, and gender-sensitive, and provide adequate resources and facilities - Learning resources - well-resourced and managed classrooms and schools
4	Quality Education - Duration, Curriculum Design, Content and Learning Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Duration of pre-school and general education - State role in curriculum design and development - Alignment of the curricula of pre-school, primary, and secondary education with the nationally prescribed National Education Goals and National Learning Competencies - Alignment of the curricula of higher education and vocational and technical education with national qualification frameworks - Synergy among curricula across all levels of education from early childhood education through general education to tertiary education - Outcome-based, multidisciplinary, integrated, and holistic education across the sciences, social sciences, humanities, aesthetics, and sports and health sciences in general education - Learning outcomes that match with nationally prescribed learning outcomes/competencies - Curriculum content and delivery that aims to promote the acquisition of basic life skills, especially in the areas of literacy, numeracy and skills for life, creativity and critical thinking, and knowledge in such areas as gender, health, nutrition, and also that aim at promoting patriotism, ethnic cohesion, social harmony, and unity in diversity - Elimination of hard separations between arts and sciences, between curricular and extracurricular activities, between academic and vocational streams, etc., in all levels of education - Flexibility of curriculum of higher education programmes, particularly in non-professional study programs so as to facilitate the learners to choose their learning pathways and programmes, and thereby customize their own career paths in life according to their talents and interests - Lateral mobility of students from technical and vocational streams into higher education streams/pathways - Multiple entry and exit provisions in higher education and technical and vocational study programmes

5	Quality education - Teaching-Learning Process and Assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teaching-learning process guided by trained and high quality teachers/faculty - Teaching-learning process that embraces learner-centered and activity-based teaching-learning methods to promote experiential/authentic learning leading to learners' cognitive, psychomotor, and emotional development - Blended mode of delivery – multiple and diverse delivery modalities adopting ICT-based tools and applications - Teaching-learning as a tri-patriate alliance among students, teachers, and parents - Teaching-learning that emphasizes conceptual understanding rather than rote learning and examination-oriented learning - Learner assessments through formative and summative assessments
6	Quality Education - Benchmarking and Quality Assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nationally prescribed best practices and standards for all elements and aspects of education. - Institutionalizing the concepts of quality and quality culture in all forms and in all aspects of education - Internal and external quality assurance mechanisms for all forms of education - Benchmarking of learning outcomes against the international standards - National accreditation system for all forms of education
AIM 4 - ALL-ROUND PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT		
7	Personality Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All-round personality development of learners by fostering psychosocial and physical development while promoting behavioural, emotional, social, and spiritual maturity and by instilling values, morals, and ethics - Imparting life skills such as communication, cooperation, teamwork, perseverance, and resilience
AIM 5 - NATIONAL IDENTITY AND UNITY IN DIVERSITY		
8	Civic Consciousness and Patriotism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provision of religious education and teaching comparative religion - Instilling nationalism and promoting affection towards the motherland and its ancient, diverse, and modern culture and knowledge systems and traditions - Imbuing human and constitutional values like empathy, respect for others, courtesy, democratic spirit, the spirit of service, respect for public property, logical and rational thinking, liberty, responsibility, pluralism, equality, and justice

AIM 6 - FUNDING, QUALITY PHYSICAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES AND ACCOUNTABILITY AND EFFICIENCY

9	Financing of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - State commitment for free education from kindergarten to university - Need-based funding, equity in distribution, and efficiency in fund utilization - Grants, scholarships, and concessionary loan schemes for those who are in need of financial support - Private sector participation in education to widen the access to education
10	Quality Human Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quality of teachers/faculty - Teacher/faculty recruitment, promotions, and deployment - In-service, and continuous professional development opportunities for teachers/faculty - Positive working environment and service conditions for teachers/faculty - Professional standards of teachers/faculty and support staff - Student/learner support and guidance services - student counsellors and mentors, physical education instructors, career guidance personnel, etc.
11	Quality Physical Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School infrastructure – buildings, classrooms, teaching laboratories, and common amenities such as sanitary facilities, restrooms, playgrounds, etc. - Learning resources – library and ICT facilities - Facilities for extracurricular activities – playgrounds, gymnasiums, sports equipment, facilities for aesthetic activities, etc.
12	Regulation, and Governance and Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - State responsibility of setting policy and regulatory framework for all State and non-State education institutions from early childhood education to primary and secondary to tertiary level education - Accountability and efficiency of the education system at all levels monitored through appropriate internal and external auditing mechanisms - Parent and community involvement in school management

Source: Author's illustration.

4. DIRECTIVE PRINCIPLES CORRESPONDING TO THE CORE AREAS OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY FRAMEWORK

As stated elsewhere, the Directive Principles (DPs) of the NEPF are the principal policies of the Government that influence and determine the decisions, actions, and other matters relating to education and these are considered as standards of NEPF (2020-2030). The DPs are framed by giving due consideration to the corresponding guiding principles that encompass all constitutional dictates, universal principles, and norms prescribed by the international accords and charters as well as the ethical and the moral standards and principles that the country aspires to uphold. Hence, the DPs should guide the development of sector-specific policies and associated strategic activities. In a policy development and implementation process, it is assumed that no decision should contravene any of these DPs.

Core Area 1: Access

- DP 1: State assumes the responsibility of ensuring “Education for All”.
- DP 2: State assures the provision of 13 years of guaranteed free education.
- DP 3: State assures the provision of universal access to early childhood education.
- DP 4: State assures the provision of access to higher education for those who are eligible.
- DP 5: State promotes technical and vocational education as an alternative tertiary education pathway.
- DP 6: State promotes the non-State education sector to operate in parallel with the State sector of education.

Core Area 2: Equity and Inclusiveness

- DP 7: Full equity and inclusion in education where need-based support is available to all students to thrive within the education system regardless of gender, race, religion or social status, geographical location or disabilities.
- DP 8: All students, regardless of any challenges they may have would be placed in age-appropriate general education classes/study programmes to receive instructions, interventions, and supports that enable them to achieve success in the core curriculum.
- DP 9: The state assumes the responsibility of absorbing the young people who are ‘not in employment, education or training’ (NEET group) into the productive economy by guiding them to the vocational and technical education pathway.
- DP 10: State promotes adult and non-formal education programmes targeting school dropouts, adults, women, displaced or marginal communities, and those who wish to engage in lifelong learning.

Core Area 3: Quality Education - Learner and Learning Environment

- DP 11: Learners must be guided throughout the learning process.
- DP 12: Learners must be educated about the options available in learning pathways and career opportunities so as to ensure every individual chooses the best learning pathway to reach the full potential to make him/her productively employable in the ‘world of work’.

- DP 13: Education must be aimed at fostering the unique capabilities of each student, by sensitizing teachers as well as parents to promote each student's holistic development in both academic and non-academic spheres.
- DP 14: Education must be flexible, and offer multiple learning pathways with multiple entry and exit points so that learners have the ability with guidance to choose their learning pathways and programmes, and thereby choose their preferred career paths according to their talents and interests.
- DP 15: Education must equip the learners with the necessary abilities to learn on their own to suit the diverse personal and societal requirements, within a rapidly changing world, following the principles of reflective practice, adult learning, and lifelong learning.
- DP 16: Achievement of broader education goals at the primary and secondary levels through a tri-partite alliance among students, teachers, and parents.
- DP 17: Students must be educated to become partners of institutional quality culture and empower them as a responsible stakeholder group in the internal quality assurance system.

Core Area 4: Quality Education - Duration, Curriculum Design, Content and Learning Outcomes

- DP 18: All students must be guaranteed 13 years of school education (*i.e. 1-5 Primary, 6-9 Junior Secondary, 10-11 year Senior Secondary, and 12-13 Upper Senior Secondary/Collegiate years of education*).
- DP 19: State assumes the responsibility of design and development of the national curriculum and instructional material in primary and secondary education.
- DP 20: Pre-school, primary, and secondary education curricula should be designed in conformity with National Education Commission prescribed National Learning Competency Framework so as to develop learners' general and subject-specific competencies (*i.e. knowledge, skills, and abilities*) as well as the generic skills (*i.e. high-order, transferable skills such as numeracy, logical analysis, critical thinking, communication, curiosity, patience, teamwork, flexibility, perseverance, resilience, courage, etc.*), and to prepare participants for more advanced education programmes, lay the foundation for psychosocial well-being of individuals, and to prepare them to become healthy and productive citizens with a craving for lifelong learning.
- DP 21: Curricula of higher education and vocational and technical education study programmes should be designed in conformity with the National Education Commission prescribed National Learning Competency Framework, and in alignment with the appropriate National Qualification Frameworks-prescribed level descriptors and qualification descriptors (*i.e. Sri Lanka Qualification Framework and National Vocational Qualification Framework, respectively*).
- DP 22: Curriculum design should ensure synergy and additive effects of curricula seamlessly across all grades/levels of education from early childhood education to school education to higher education.
- DP 23: Curriculum in primary and junior secondary education should not make any hard separations between arts and sciences, between curricular and extracurricular activities, between academic and vocational streams, etc., in order to eliminate harmful hierarchies among and formation of silos between different areas of learning.

- DP 24: Curriculum at all levels must offer outcome-based (*i.e. constructively aligned with expected outcomes*), interdisciplinary, integrated, and holistic education across the sciences, social sciences, humanities, aesthetics, and sports in order to ensure the unity and integrity of all knowledge and holistic development of children to prepare them for a multidisciplinary world.
- DP 25: Flexibility in the tertiary education level must be ensured by offering multiple entry and exit points and pathways so as to promote lifelong learning and continuing professional advancement.
- DP 26: All curricula at all levels (*from early childhood to secondary education to tertiary education*) should undergo periodic evaluation and continuous monitoring and revision at periodic intervals to suit the intended purposes and national requirements in the light of changing technologies and labour market dynamics.

Core Area 5: Quality Education – Medium of Instruction, Teaching-Learning and Assessment

- DP 27: Mother Tongue (*Sinhala/Tamil*) should continue to be the medium of instruction at primary and secondary levels.
- DP 28: Provision would be made available for Sinhala-speaking children to learn Tamil and Tamil-speaking children to learn Sinhala.
- DP 29: Teaching of activity-based functional English should be encouraged from Grade 1, and the formal teaching of English should be made compulsory from Grade 3 to 13.
- DP 30: Bilingual or Bimedial delivery (*Sinhala and English or Tamil and English*) shall be made available as an option at the Secondary Education level.
- DP 31: Teaching-learning process must emphasize conceptual understanding and higher-order cognitive skills rather than rote learning and learning-for-examinations.
- DP 32: Teaching-learning process shall embrace as much as possible learner-centered and activity-based teaching-learning methods so as to promote experiential/authentic learning that promotes self-regulated learning and enables the learner to construct her/his knowledge and skills through active participation in the teaching-learning process.
- DP 33: Curricula delivery should adopt the blended mode of teaching-learning approach with the extensive use of technology, along with the provision of adequate opportunity for hands-on learning and open-ended exploration using ICT applications.
- DP 34: Children and youth should be educated to keep themselves safe from internet threats.
- DP 35: Teaching-learning and assessment process should conform to prescribed quality and standards.
- DP 36: Evaluation and certification of students' achievement should be based on both formative and summative assessments that are designed to achieve all intended learning outcomes and also to ensure validity and reliability.
- DP 37: Assessment at Grade 5, G.C.E. (O/L), and G.C.E. (A/L) shall be a State function.

Core Area 6: Quality Education – Standards, Monitoring and Benchmarking

- DP 38: Concepts of quality and quality culture shall be institutionalized in all forms of education through nationally prescribed criteria, standards, and best practices, and by having external and internal monitoring quality assessment systems.
- DP 39: Internal and external quality assurance mechanisms for all forms of education shall be in place to monitor the quality of inputs, systems and processes, and outcomes.
- DP 40: Criteria and standards adopted by Quality Assurance and Accreditation Systems in higher education and technical and vocational education institutes must be benchmarked against international criteria and standards to promote mobility of high school graduates {G.C.E. (O/L) and G.C.E (A/L) qualifiers}, diplomates and graduates.
- DP 41: Sri Lankan general education system must internalize STEAM (*Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics*) education as an approach for teaching-learning that uses science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics as access points for guiding student inquiry, dialogue, and critical thinking, and prepare the students to embark on a path of improvement to move rapidly towards enhanced performance.
- DP 42: Sri Lankan general education system must take steps to benchmark its teaching-learning outcomes through periodic submission of its students to international testing systems/ services such as Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) or equivalent testing system.

Core Area 7: Personality Development

- DP 43: Education should facilitate all-round personality development by fostering cognitive, physical, and psychosocial development of children from early childhood to the adult state while promoting behavioural, emotional, social, and spiritual maturity and instilling values, morals, and ethics.
- DP 44: Education should impart life skills such as communication, cooperation, teamwork, leadership, managerial and entrepreneurial skills, perseverance, and resilience.

Core Area 8: Civic Consciousness and Patriotism

- DP 45: Education should instil nationalism and patriotism in students so as to promote affection towards Sri Lanka as their motherland and to value its history, culture, and knowledge systems and traditions.
- DP 46: Provision of religious education and teaching of comparative religion should be made compulsory in all primary and secondary schools, without forcing children or making it a compulsory subject in the school curriculum.
- DP 47: Education must imbue civic consciousness, patience, resilience, empathy, respect for others, courtesy, democratic spirit, respect for public property, logical and rational thinking, liberty, responsibility, accountability, pluralism, equality, and justice.

Core Area 9: Quality Human Resources

- DP 48: Teacher/faculty recruitment, deployment, and promotions must be based on a fair and transparent system and procedures to ensure the decisions with respect to recruitment, deployment, and promotions are made without any undue influence.
- DP 49: All teachers/faculty and other staff (*i.e. library, technical, and student and career guidance counselling staff*) must be provided with adequate and appropriate opportunities for professional and career advancements (*i.e. in-service, and continuing professional development and promotions*).
- DP 50: All teachers/faculty and other staff (*i.e. library, technical, and student and career guidance counselling staff*) must be provided with conducive working environments and service conditions.

Core Area 10: Quality Physical Resources

- DP 51: All education institutions, irrespective of geographical location and student number, must be provided with minimum requirements of teaching facilities – adequately resourced classrooms, adequately equipped laboratories, activity rooms, libraries, etc., as required.
- DP 52: All education institutions, irrespective of geographical location and student number must be provided with all required common amenities – restrooms, sick-rooms, running water, electricity, sports facilities, etc.
- DP 53: All education institutions, irrespective of geographical location and student number must be provided with ICT facilities manned by competent personnel to facilitate the use of ICT-based teaching-learning tools.
- DP 54: All education institutions which accommodate students with special needs must be equipped with the required infrastructure, teaching facilities and learning aids, and assistive devices required to cater for such students.
- DP 55: Education institutions located in rural locations must be provided with accommodation facilities for teachers.

Core Area 11: Regulations, and Governance and Management

- DP 56: State assumes the responsibility for setting the policy and regulatory framework for all State and non-State education institutions from early childhood education through primary to secondary to tertiary level education.
- DP 57: Accountability and efficiency of governance and management of all educational institutions at all levels shall be monitored through appropriate internal and external auditing mechanisms.
- DP 58: Parent and community involvement in school management is encouraged to create a vital link between school authorities and students' families and communities, and to optimize the tri-partite alliance among students, teachers, and parents.

Core Area 12: Financing of Education

- DP 59: Free education is guaranteed from kindergarten to university education.
- DP 60: Incremental increase of public expenditure over the next 10 years on education from the current level of 2.1% to 4.5% of GDP while improving the need-based fund distribution and efficiency of fund utilization.
- DP 61: Provision of student aids for education as grants and concessionary loans for eligible students.
- DP 62: Encouragement of true philanthropic private and community participation in education by providing financial and tax incentives, as appropriate, within a conducive regulatory framework to establish and operate not-for-profit education institutions.

PART IV

SUBSECTOR SPECIFIC POLICIES AND STRATEGIC ACTIVITY FRAMEWORKS

POLICY PROPOSALS AND RECOMMENDED STRATEGIC ACTIVITIES ON:

VOLUME I	EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION
VOLUME II	GENERAL EDUCATION
VOLUME III	HIGHER EDUCATION
VOLUME IV	TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING
වෙළුම V	පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපනය
VOLUME VI	SPECIAL AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION
VOLUME VII	NON-FORMAL EDUCATION
VOLUME VIII	INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL EDUCATION

PART IV - VOLUME I

**POLICY PROPOSALS AND
RECOMMENDED STRATEGIC
ACTIVITIES ON EARLY CHILDHOOD
CARE AND EDUCATION**



1. STATUS REVIEW

1.1 Introduction

Investment in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) has been considered a powerful elixir for human capital development. It has promoted gender equality and social cohesion and reduced the costs for later remedial programmes. As such, ECCE was included as a major area in global agendas such as Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Target 4.2 of SDG 4 'Quality Education' was aimed at ensuring all girls and boys would have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they would be ready for primary education by 2030. As a signatory to these global agendas, Sri Lanka has taken many progressive measures to demonstrate its commitment to ECCE. Despite the efforts taken, the ECCE sector in Sri Lanka is still confronted with many issues that hinder the universal provision and full achievement of the benefits of ECCE services.

The current status of ECCE in the Sri Lankan context has been reviewed in the policy document under the subheadings: a) Need for an effective enforceable national policy on ECCE, b) Lack of clarity in role definition in the provision of ECCE services, c) Inequalities in access and enrolment, d) Substandard quality of ECCE provisions, e) Inadequate focus on holistic nature of ECCE, f) Inadequacies of public investment, government regulation, coordination and oversight, g) Poor quality of ECCE teachers and caregivers, h) Lack of enforceable legal provisions for ECCE and, i) Limited engagement in ECCE by parents. The detailed version of the Status Review is given in the full text of the NEPF (2020-2030) and the summary version is presented below.

- a. Need for an effective enforceable national policy on ECCE:** According to the National Education Commission Act, the President (*subject to the provisions of the Constitution*) of Sri Lanka may declare from time to time the National Education Policy. While powers in respect of education have been devolved to Provincial Councils, those powers must be exercised in conformity with national policy. Since there was no national policy on ECCE, the provinces have formulated their policies and passed their statutes on ECCE. Therefore, to implement central government policy initiatives effectively across all provinces, Sri Lanka needs an effective enforceable national policy declared by the President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.
- b. Lack of clarity in role definition in the provision of ECCE services:** The ECCE sector is centrally directed and coordinated, and primarily managed by provinces. However, it was found that there was no consensus over who should take the lead role at the national level. This has arisen as a result of the existing policy of entrusting overlapping responsibilities to two agencies; overall responsibility of early childhood care and development has been entrusted to the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs, and the responsibility of formulating and implementing a national policy on preschool education has been entrusted to the Ministry of Education. To resolve this issue, in 2020, the National Management and Regulatory Committee (NMRC) has been established in the Ministry of Education to guide the formulation of policies, projects and activities that are required for maintaining a high standard in early childhood education of Sri Lanka and monitoring and empowering the implementation of such activities.
- c. Inequalities in access and enrolment:** There is a noticeable disparity in the enrolment rates across provinces (*ranging from 47.0% - 80.2%*), districts (*ranging from 46.1%-82.7%*) and among urban, rural and estate sectors (*67.7%, 47.5% and 43.9% respectively*) in Sri Lanka. Statistics also show that, in 2016, only 55.6% of 3-5-year-old children were enrolled in ECD centres. The reasons for low attendance appear to be multifactorial; unavailability of preschools near the households, terrain difficulties, high enrolment and tuition fees, and lack of parental awareness of the benefits of early childhood education. Further, access to ECCE for children with special needs is limited with only 49 out of 19,668 ECD centres catering to such children in the country.

- d. Substandard and quality of ECCE provisions:** The quality ECCE provisions in Sri Lanka is challenged by misguided competition in achieving capabilities in reading, writing and mathematics. It has marginalized the concept of holistic development in the minds of both teachers and parents. Lack of national curriculum framework and teachers' guides has resulted in ECD centres carrying out activities that are not developmentally appropriate. Moreover, most ECD centres are poorly resourced to cater for children with special needs.
- e. Inadequate focus on holistic nature of ECCE:** For ECCE to be effective, care and education must supplement each other. Opportunities should be available to the child to optimize development, especially during critical periods of brain development in the home environment through a process of advocacy and education in collaboration with other sectors that promote best parenting practices. To achieve this, an integrated approach to ECCE is essential since it focuses on holistic child development. The integrated approach fundamentally seeks to build cross-sectoral coordination, promote programme innovation, and overcome gaps in knowledge, service and resources.
- f. Poor quality of ECCE teachers and caregivers:** Statistics show that around 10% of teachers serving in ECD centres do not have any formal training on ECCE or recognized qualifications. Furthermore, 3.5% of teachers do not possess G.C.E. (O/L), which is the minimum educational qualification for an ECD teacher stipulated in Provincial Statutes. Although there are certificate and diploma level training programmes on ECCE, there are no degree level programmes that offer higher qualifications. Research reveals that even the teachers who have professional qualifications are not updated with new knowledge. In addition, the tendency among Sri Lankan parents to view ECD centres as centres for preparing their children for primary education rather than as a place for promoting their holistic development has also affected the quality of teaching-learning methods adopted in ECD centres. Furthermore, ECCE teachers and support staff are usually underpaid and this along with low social recognition given to the ECCE teachers have made it difficult to attract quality people into the ECCE sector.
- g. Inadequacies of public investment, government regulation and coordination and oversight:** The provision of ECCE services in Sri Lanka has been largely dependent on non-State resources and incentives. Due to minimal public provision and control and oversight, there are considerable geographic variations in access to and quality of ECCE services, where the poor, mostly in rural areas depriving of the benefits of ECCE. With the decentralized role of supervision and management of ECD centres, there appears to be confusion with regard to roles and responsibilities of the National Secretariat for Early Childhood Development and Provincial Administrative Entities (*such as authorities/units/bureaus/departments*) established for governing and coordination of ECCE and front-line workers such as ECD officers. It also has affected the allocation of finances and other resources and resulted in duplication of functions. As a result, there is an inadequacy in the quality and standards of ECCE provisions and disparities across provinces and districts.
- h. Lack of enforceable legal provisions for ECCE at national and provincial levels:** The National Secretariat for Early Childhood Development (NSECD) has taken several measures to implement measures to enhance the quality of ECCE provisions. These measures include prescribing minimum standards for ECD centres, making mandatory for the registration of ECCE teacher training programmes, and developing early childhood development standards for preschool children aged 3-5 years. Since these measures are not backed by enforceable legal provisions, the NSECD has not been able to take action against those who do not adhere to the prescribed guidelines. Provincial administrative entities established for ECCE also have failed to take any legal action against those who violate provincial statutes and regulations. ECD centres (*preschools*) in private schools and international schools are not registered with these provincial administrative entities (PAEs) set up for ECCE and are not bound by standards introduced by the NSECD and provinces. These centres run as profit-making businesses registered under the Companies Act. Lack of legal powers to take action against these centres and other centres which operate without obtaining registration is a serious challenge faced by NSECD and PAEs.

- i. **Limited parental engagement in ECCE:** Parents' engagement in their children's early childhood education is not adequately facilitated and appears to have been misguided by the over-enthusiastic emphasis placed on physical growth and preparation for schooling. This stems from their lack of understanding of the value of ECCE in psychosocial development and its role and responsibilities in guiding preschool children to accrue intended benefits. Parents often place relatively less value on the intrinsic benefits of ECCE and tend to view ECD centres solely as learning centres that prepare children for their entry into primary school. It is important to engage parents in a reciprocal way which helps teachers to understand the child's family culture and provide culturally relevant learning experiences and parents to understand the school culture and share their child's unique strengths and talents and also the weaknesses and deficiencies with the teachers.

1.2. Conclusion

Despite the progressive measures taken by the central government and provincial authorities, the ECCE sector continues to experience many issues and limitations. These include the lack of enforceable legal provisions for ECCE to regulate the sector, absence of an effective enforceable national policy, lack of clarity in role definition in the regulation and supervision of management of ECCE services, inequalities of access and enrolment, substandard quality of ECCE provisions, inadequate focus on holistic nature of ECCE, inadequacies of public investment, feeble coordination and oversight mechanisms, poor quality of ECCE teachers and caregivers and poor remuneration and inadequate social recognition given to ECCE workforce, and limited engagement by parents. These issues appear to curtail the quality and standards of the ECCE service provision in Sri Lanka.

2. POLICY PROPOSALS AND RECOMMENDED STRATEGIC ACTIVITIES

Having completed a comprehensive Status Review, the National Education Commission has proposed this policy document to overcome the issues related to ECCE and ensure the provision of quality ECCE services to all children. The proposed policies have been formulated in recognition of the right of every child in early childhood in Sri Lanka to learn and develop in an environment that lays the foundation for holistic development and attributes of social responsibilities. The ECCE policies in this document have followed Core Areas and Guided Principles (GP) constructed by the NEC for the National Education Policy Framework (2020-2030). However, the Core Areas and Directive Principles (DP) have been adapted to suit the ECCE sector. This approach is taken, as stated elsewhere, to ensure the policy planning process gives comprehensive coverage across the sub-sector specific core areas and elements while giving due consideration to issues and gaps highlighted in the Status Review that are lingering the progressive developments of the childhood care and education sector.

The early childhood care and education sector-specific core areas include;

- i. Access, and Equity and Inclusiveness,
- ii. Holistic Development - Physical, Cognitive and Socioemotional Development,
- iii. Quality of Early Childhood Care and Education - Structure, Processes and Outcomes,
- iv. Benchmarking and Quality Assurance,
- v. Financing of Early Childhood Care and Education, and
- vi. Regulation, and Governance and Management.

Core Area – ECCE 1: Access, and Equity and Inclusiveness

Directive Principles

- DP 1: The State assumes the responsibility of provision of early childhood care and education with need-based support to all children including the most disadvantaged and vulnerable.
- DP 2: The State considers diversity as an asset, and therefore, the State together with all educators should take the responsibility of identifying and removing barriers to equity and inclusion in early childhood education.
- DP 3: The State recognizes the role of the non-State sector in ECCE, and facilitates its participation as a parallel partner.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-ECCE 1.1: All children around the age of 3 to 5 years should have access to at least a year of affordable early childhood care and education

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The Ministry in-charge of the subject of Child Affairs under the technical advice and guidance of the National Management and Regulatory Committee (NMRC), and through the National Secretariat for Early Childhood Development (NSECD) shall introduce early childhood education enrolment policy to ensure an equitable and inclusive enrolment process which would be implemented through Provincial Administrative Entities of ECCE.
- The NSECD under the technical advice and guidance of the NMRC shall facilitate the Provincial Administrative Entities of ECCE (*i.e. authorities/units/bureaus/departments*) to set up quality ECD centres in unserved and underserved areas and disadvantaged locations.
- The NSECD together with Provincial Administrative Entities (PAEs) of ECCE shall take steps to enhance parental and community awareness about ECCE activities and healthy parenting practices through outreach campaigns in collaboration with all stakeholders.
- The NSECD shall provide funds and guidance to PAEs of ECCE to provide mandatory support for children at risk from poverty, disability, violence, disasters, gender biases, institutionalized care, truancy, and children residing with their mothers in prisons to attend ECCE programmes available in their localities.
- The NSECD together with the PAEs of ECCE shall take steps to promote public-private partnerships and philanthropic initiatives to expand access to ECCE.
- The Ministry in-charge of the subject of Child Affairs shall take measures to offer concessionary/interest-free loans to non-State providers to establish ECCE centres in unserved and underserved provinces and regions.
- The Ministry in-charge of the subject Child Affairs shall take steps to introduce incentives such as 'ECD Vouchers' for children of economically disadvantaged households to promote access to and enrolment in

ECCE.

- The Ministry in-charge of the subject of Child Affairs through the NSECD and the PAEs of ECCE shall provide a system of continuous support to low-resourced ECD centres to expand the access to ECCE, and improve the facilities and resources.

Policy-ECCE 1.2:

Early childhood care and education should be inclusive and equitable in order to provide learning opportunities for all children around the age of 3-5 years regardless of their wealth, gender, caste, ethnicity, language, geographical location, social background or disability

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The NMRC in collaboration and consultation with the National Education Commission (NEC) and the NSECD, shall establish minimum standards for ECD centres that ensure equity and inclusiveness.
- The Ministry in-charge of the subject of Child Affairs under the technical advice and guidance of NMRC shall issue appropriate directives and guidelines through the NSECD and PAEs of ECCE to all ECCE providers/centres to comply with the principles of equity and inclusion.
- The NSECD and PAEs of ECCE shall promote and facilitate the use of mother tongue or child's home language in centre-based learning environments with the reasonable use of other national languages as well as English as the link language as children have the capacity to learn more than one language.
- The NSECD shall ensure the liaison between the ECCE providers/centres with relevant institutions such as National Child Protection Authority, Family Health Bureau and other relevant health sector institutions, and Social Service Department to create an environment that supports and implement equitable and inclusive education for all children including those who are with special needs.
- The NSECD together with the PAEs of ECCE shall take steps to facilitate the development of technical competencies and professionalism among the ECCE workforce (*i.e. knowledge, skills and attitudes and etiquette and mannerism of the ECCE workforce*) to ensure that diversity in the ECCE setting is respected and barriers to equity and inclusiveness are identified and eliminated.
- The Ministry in-charge of the subject of Child Affairs through NSECD shall provide grants and other funding for ECCE providers/centres that provide services to the most disadvantaged and vulnerable communities.
- The NSECD shall take steps to facilitate all the State and non-State training institutions including universities, to train the professional staff of the ECCE centres on the application of screening tests and instruments for detection and identification of children at risk of developmental delays and psycho-social problems to ensure early interventions.
- The NSECD together with the PAEs of ECCE shall take steps to promote the ECCE centres to establish and operate parent social networking such as parents societies/associations in order to ensure equity by helping parents to get to know each other and develop a sense of togetherness.

Core Area – ECCE 2: Holistic Development – Physical, Cognitive and Socioemotional Development

Directive Principles

- DP 1: The State recognizes the value of well-organized early childhood care and education programmes in providing enriching and positive environmental experiences that support the holistic development of children
- DP 2: The State assures the responsibility of setting the regulations and strategic directions for the ECCE sector and prescribing criteria and minimum standards for the establishment and operation of ECCE centres.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-ECCE 2.1: All early childhood care and education programmes should aim at supporting holistic development in children around the age of 3 to 5 years

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The Ministry in-charge of the subject of Child Affairs under the technical advice and guidance of the NMRC and through the NSECD and PAEs of ECCE shall issue guidelines to all ECCE providers/centres to ensure the learning experiences that they provide allow the holistic development of children to achieve maximum potential in growth and development, cognitive skills and understand themselves and others, build positive self-concepts, enjoy relationships with peers and adults.
- The NSECD under the technical advice and guidance of NMRC shall prescribe standards for all ECCE providers/centres to ensure the facilities, resources and services offered by them are conducive for the holistic development of children.
- The NSECD under the technical advice and guidance of NMRC shall prescribe a 'Codes of Practice' for teachers and caregivers of ECCE centres to ensure the provision of learning experiences that are focused on the holistic development of children.
- The NSECD under the technical advice and guidance of NMRC and in working through the PAEs of ECCE shall facilitate ECCE providers/centres by providing financial assistance, materials, and technical guidance to strengthen their centres and programmes.
- The NSECD together with PAEs of ECCE shall take steps to ensure all ECCE providers/centres should pledge explicitly that all children including the most disadvantaged and vulnerable are unconditionally valued, respected, and loved.
- The NSECD shall facilitate the PAEs of ECCE to provide training manuals and guidelines for teachers and caregivers of ECCE centres to build positive individualized relationships between teachers and children and teachers and parents.
- The NSECD together with the PAEs of ECCE shall take steps to develop the capacity of ECCE teachers in supporting parents to adopt positive parenting practices that include positive behavioural support

techniques to develop children's self-concept, self-esteem, and parents' capacities to understand and deal appropriately with children's temperament.

Core Area – ECCE 3: Quality of Early Childhood Care and Education – Structure, Processes and Outcomes

Directive Principles

- DP 1: The State assumes the responsibility of ensuring all ECCE centres provide safe, well-arranged and well-equipped learning environments that are crucial for early childhood care and education.
- DP 2: The State assumes the responsibility of prescribing the developmentally appropriate early childhood curricula and teachers' guides that would ensure the provision of adequate opportunities to explore, experiment, and learn, use age-appropriate technologies and interactive media.
- DP 3: All ECCE centres should ensure the adoption of teaching-learning processes that embrace child-centered, play-based methods that promote experiential/authentic learning that enables the children to become active learners in developing their knowledge and skills.
- DP 4: All ECCE centres should ensure the adoption of formative assessments of children to provide enriching experiences to the child and parents as well as to the teacher, and such information must be used by teachers to make well informed instructional decisions that support children's learning and development.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-ECCE 3.1: All ECCE providers should ensure all early childhood care and education settings and learning experiences would promote the holistic development of children and facilitate the smooth transition of children from pre-school to formal school

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The NSECD shall take steps to strengthen its technical capacity to function as the central focal point of the ECCE sector by establishing a Technical Unit consisting of permanent professionally qualified staff to formulate strategies for improving the quality of ECCE provisions and guide the adoption of those strategies by the ECCE providers/centres and monitor the implementation.
- The NSECD under the technical advice and guidance of NMRC and together with the NEC and NIE and experts in ECCE shall take steps to formulate minimum standards (*i.e. norms for physical and human resources, age-appropriate teaching-learning resources, and programme/activities*) required for establishment and operation of ECCE centres.
- The Ministry in-charge of the subject of Child Affairs under the technical advice and guidance of NMRC shall issue regulations requiring all PAEs to ensure all ECCE providers/centres comply with minimum standards prescribed by the NSECD and register their operation under the respective provincial administrative authorities.

- The NSECD shall facilitate the PAEs of ECCE to establish and maintain a consolidated ECCE centre registration system for all provinces in Sri Lanka while simultaneously feeding the information to the central database at the NSECD.
- The NSECD under the technical advice and guidance of the NMRC and in collaboration with NIE and other stakeholders shall develop and introduce a curriculum framework and teachers' guides prepared in accordance with the NEC prescribed National Learning Competency Framework for ECED programmes.
- The NSECD together with the PAEs of ECCE shall take steps to ensure the adoption of NSECD/NIE prescribed curriculum framework and teachers' guides. In instances where different curricula are adopted such ECD providers/centres should map those curricula and teachers' guides with the NSECD/NIE prescribed curriculum framework and teachers' guides and seek approval from the NSECD.
- The Ministry in-charge of the subject of Child Affairs under technical advice and guidance of the NMRC shall issue regulations and standards for the production, publication, and distribution of educational material produced with commercial or noncommercial intent for ECD centres and preschool-aged children.
- The Ministry in-charge of the subject of Child Affairs under technical advice and guidance of the NMRC and in consultation with the TVEC shall decide the appropriate NVQ Level that would be considered as the minimum qualifications to function as ECCE teaching staff and support staff and issue regulations prescribing the minimum qualifications required for recruitment of teachers and support staff.
- The NSECD under the technical advice and guidance of the NMRC shall regulate and monitor the scope, content, and quality of all professional development programmes on ECCE conducted by training providers.
- The NSECD together with the PAEs of ECCE shall take steps to establish ECD Training and Resource Centres in each province and appoint qualified NSECD personnel to provide in-service training for the ECD workforce and also conduct parental educational programmes in collaboration with relevant agencies/institutes/centres and NGOs.
- The NSECD and the PAEs of ECCE shall use the ECD Training and Resource Centres as well as training providers to conduct regular continuing professional development (CPD) programmes for all categories of staff involved in the provision of ECCE services enabling them to update their knowledge, skills, and practices.
- The NSECD and the PAEs of ECCE shall facilitate universities, the National Institute of Education (NIE) and other institutes of higher education to design, and offer programmes for the ECCE workforce to acquire necessary pre-service professional qualifications.
- The Ministry in-charge of the subject of Child Affairs under the technical advice and guidance of the NMRC shall take measures to ensure the dignity of the ECD teachers, their job security, and career progress through implementing a suitable institutional mechanism that enables them to secure decent wages and service conditions.

Policy-ECCE 3.2:

All early childhood care and education programmes should implement developmentally appropriate, child-centered, play-based pedagogical approaches that promote children's holistic development and their lifelong learning

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The NSECD under the technical advice and guidance of the NMRC and in liaison with the NEC and NIE shall prescribe Codes of Practice and guidelines for ECCE teachers and support staff to ensure that all ECCE settings implement child-centred, play-based developmentally appropriate pedagogies.
- The NSECD and the PAEs of ECCE shall implement programmes through Provincial level ECD Training and Resource Centres as well as in liaison with other suitable institutions to develop teacher capacities on the application of pedagogically well-planned methods that promote children's holistic development including their motivation for learning, positive peer relationships, and peer acceptance.
- The NSECD and the PAEs of ECCE shall take steps to implement programmes to ensure positive interactions between ECCE teachers and Grade 1 teachers of primary schools and ECCE teachers and parent/guardians to ensure a smooth transition from ECCE centre to Primary School.

Policy-ECCE 3.3:

All early childhood care and education programmes should ensure that child outcomes reflect children's holistic development and their learning dispositions

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The NSECD and PAEs of ECCE shall take steps to ensure that all ECCE providers/centres adopt the nationally prescribed ECCE curriculum framework and teachers' guides to ensure the attainment of intended learning outcomes by the children enrolled in their programmes.
- The NSECD and the PAEs of ECCE should facilitate ECCE teachers to use developmentally appropriate formative assessments to support children's holistic development and learning.
- The NSECD through PAEs of ECCE shall facilitate and promote ECD centres to implement early childhood development standards and assessments that measure child outcomes.
- The NSECD shall use child outcomes data at the national and provincial levels to inform, evaluate and improve the ECCE system.
- The NSECD and PAEs of ECCE shall ensure all ECCE providers/centres would provide a document containing curricula followed by the respective ECD centres including the expectations for developmentally appropriate child outcomes to parents and regulatory authorities.

Core Area – ECCE 4: Benchmarking and Quality Assurance

Directive Principles

- DP 1: The State is committed to ensuring quality and standards of ECE provisions by institutionalizing the concept of quality and quality culture in ECCE centres through a nationally prescribed quality assurance and accreditation framework (*i.e. criteria, elements, standards and best practices*).
- DP 2: All ECCE providers/centres and programmes should be subjected to a national quality assurance and accreditation process.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-ECCE 4.1: A national quality assurance and accreditation system matching with international benchmarks should be in place to guide, review and certify/accredit all ECCE programmes

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The NMRC in collaboration with the NEC shall formulate a quality assurance framework that includes criteria and elements, best practices, and standards covering all aspects of ECCE to promote the standards and quality of ECCE service provisions across all provinces and all ECCE centres.
- The Ministry in-charge of the subject of Child Affairs under the technical advice and guidance of the NMRC shall facilitate the establishment of a National Quality Assurance Council (NQAC) at the NEC supported by national regulations to administer the quality assurance and accreditation programme through the NSECD and PAEs of ECCE.
- The NSECD under the technical advice and guidance of the NMRC shall facilitate the PAEs of ECCE to establish Provincial Quality Assurance Units (PQAUs) in respective provinces to liaise with NQAC of NEC in implementing the quality assurance and accreditation programme.
- The NSECD and PAEs of ECCE in liaison with NQAC of the NEC and the PQAUs shall promote all the ECCE centres to establish an internal quality assurance system within their centres.
- The Ministry in-charge of the subject of Child Affairs under the technical advice and guidance of the NMRC shall prescribe regulations requiring all ECCE providers/centres and programmes to comply with the guidelines issued by the NSECD and NQAC and PQAUs, and subject their centres and programmes for mandatory periodic external quality assurance review conducted by the PQAUs under the guidance and technical support of the NQAC of the NEC.
- The PQAUs in liaison with the NQAC of the NEC shall conduct periodical reviews of the quality of the ECD centres and the services provided to them.
- The NSECD in liaison with NQAC of the NEC shall promote a quality and quality culture within the centres managed by government institutions, higher education institutions, private sector institutions, NGOs and religious organizations and facilitate the NQAC of the NEC to conduct periodical reviews of the quality of the

ECCE centres established and operated in their respective institutions.

- The NSECD under the technical advice and guidance of the NMRC shall promote research on ECCE by providing grants and conducting regular research conferences in collaboration with NEC, NIE, and other relevant institutions to strengthen the links among policy, research and practices.
- The NSECD under the technical advice and guidance of the NMRC shall ensure NSECD develops and maintains an Education Management Information System (EMIS) for the ECCE sector. The EMIS shall be centrally hosted and provincially managed. The main purpose of the EMIS would be to improve preschool registration, monitoring, analyses, planning, and use of the data for decision making, as well as to harmonize procedures, indicators and data across the different provinces.

Core Area – ECCE 5: Financing of Early Childhood Care and Education

Directive Principles

- DP 1: The State considers education as a public good and ensures the provision of adequate public investment to ensure equity and quality of early childhood care and education.
- DP 2: The State recognizes the benefits that the ECCE sector could accrue from public-private partnerships.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-ECCE 5.1: Adequate equitable and sustainable funding should be ensured for early childhood care and education

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The Ministry in-charge of the subject of Child Affairs and the Provincial Ministries of Education shall take steps to Increase public investments/budgetary allocations to promote equitable access and enhance the quality of ECCE provisions.
- The Ministry in-charge of Child Affairs and the Provincial Ministries of Education through the NSECD and PAEs of ECCE shall take steps to promote investments by development partners (*Local and International NGOs and Private sector*) in the ECCE sector.
- The Ministry in-charge of the subject of Child Affairs shall take necessary steps to introduce tax incentives to encourage private investment in ECCE especially for the investment projects that are aimed to serve in unserved and underserved areas and for most disadvantaged and vulnerable children.
- The Ministry in-charge of Child Affairs through the NSECD and Provincial Ministries of Education through the PAEs of ECCE shall promote non-State sector to establish and operate affordable early childhood development centres in unserved and underserved areas.
- The Ministry in-charge of Child Affairs through NSECD and Provincial Ministries of Education through the PAEs of ECCE shall finance scholarships for the ECCE workforce and for those who wish to join the ECCE workforce to acquire necessary pre-service qualifications.

Core Area – ECCE 6: Regulation, and Governance and Management

Directive Principles

- DP 1: The State ensures the enactment of the legal framework for the ECCE sector to guarantee the rights of every preschool-aged child to have the access to quality early childhood education and to regulate the ECCE sector.
- DP 2: The State recognizes the need for having an appropriate governance and management structure with clear delineation of roles and responsibilities of central and provincial authorities and agencies.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-ECCE 6.1: Legal and regulatory framework, cohesive policy and a well-aligned system, with effective and accountable governance and management, shall be ensured for early childhood care and education

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The Ministry in-charge of the subject of Child Affairs shall take necessary steps to enact appropriate legislation and establish institutional and regulatory framework for the ECCE sector to empower the State agencies to prescribe and enforce necessary regulations to ensure the equity and inclusiveness, and quality of the early childhood care and education system. The proposed institutional and regulatory framework for the ECCE sector is detailed in Section 3.
- The Ministry in-charge of the subject of Child Affairs under the technical advice and guidance of the NMRC shall take steps to strengthen the NSECD and the PAEs of ECCE to oversee the governance, management and coordination, and quality assurance process of ECCE.
- The NSECD under the technical advice and guidance of NMRC shall facilitate PAEs of ECCE to set up Provincial Coordinating and Monitoring Committees on ECCE to monitor ECCE institutions, training programmes, workforce, financing services, etc. in their respective provinces.
- The NSECD under the technical advice and guidance of the NMRC and in collaboration with PAEs of ECCE shall promote multisectoral planning between national and provincial level agencies and among provinces to ensure efficiency, coordination, and alignment across programmes.
- The NSECD under the technical advice and guidance of NMRC shall prescribe appropriate regulations and codes of practice to all ECCE providers/centres to ensure they explicitly commit to provide respectful and responsive care and ensure the safety and security of children and refrain and prevent any form of exploitation within as well as outside the ECD centres.
- The NSECD in collaboration with PAEs of ECCE shall mandate ECCE centres to obtain an explicit pledge on the commitment of teachers and other staff for respectful and responsive care and the safety and security of children and refrain and prevent any form of exploitation within as well as outside the ECD centres.
- The NSECD in collaboration with PAEs of ECCE shall mandate all ECCE centres to obtain an explicit pledge

from parents to commit to respectful and responsive care and safety and security of children and refrain and prevent any form of exploitation within as well as outside the ECD centres.

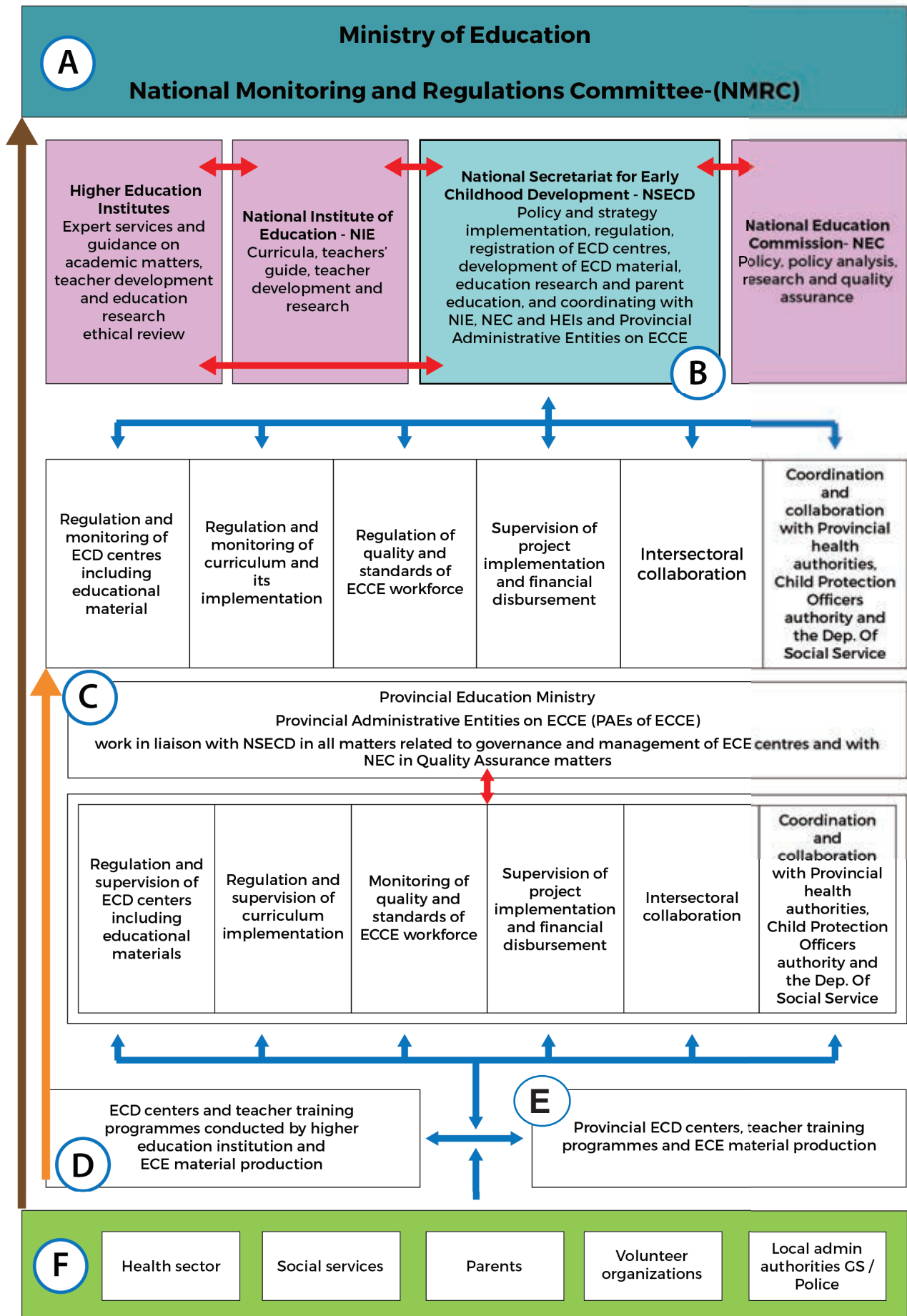
- The NSECD in collaboration with PAEs of ECCE shall ensure that all ECCE centres refrain from propagating any form of extremist ideas, antisocial attitudes or behaviours that lead to ethnic or religious disharmony and have detrimental effects on peace and harmony of the society.
- The NSECD under the technical advice and guidance of NMRC shall facilitate the establishment of national-level Ethical Review Committees (ERC) at the NEC and make mandatory for any research group/donor-funded project teams to obtain prior approval from the ERC of the NEC to ensure that children in ECCE centres are not exploited in research and/or development activities.

3. PROPOSED INSTITUTIONAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR THE ECCE SECTOR

The NEC recognizes the importance of having a well defined institutional and regulatory framework for the effective functioning of the ECCE sector and also for the successful implementation of the proposed policy proposals and recommended strategic activities on ECCE. Accordingly an appropriate institutional and regulatory framework with well delineated roles and responsibilities of key agencies at the central and provincial levels is proposed herewith. The proposed institutional and regulatory framework also ensures the inclusion of all stakeholders of ECCE in the decision making and policy implementation process through committees established at various levels of governance and management.

The proposed institutional and regulatory framework including the key agencies at central and provincial level and their roles and responsibilities, and coordinating committees and their composition and functions are detailed in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Proposed Institutional and Regulatory Framework for the ECCE Sector



Source: Author's illustration

(A) NATIONAL MONITORING AND REGULATION COMMITTEE (NMRC)

The NMRC which is currently established in the Ministry of Education is the central level advisory and monitoring and regulatory body of the ECCE sector. The composition of the Committee according to the approved Cabinet Paper is as follows:

1. Secretary, Ministry of Education - Committee Chairman
2. Secretary, State Ministry in-charge of the subject preschools - Convenor
3. Chairman of the National Education Commission or a representative appointed by the Chairman to represent the relevant field
4. Chairman of the University Grants Commission or a representative appointed by the Chairman to represent the relevant field
5. Chairman of the Finance Commission or a representative appointed by the Chairman to represent the relevant field
6. A Senior Staff Grade Officer of the Ministry of Health nominated by the Secretary to the same Ministry representing maternal, child and nutrition divisions
7. A Senior Staff Officer of the Ministry in-charge of the subject of Provincial Councils and Local Government nominated by the same Ministry
8. A Senior Executive Officer nominated by the Ministry in-charge of the subject of Law/Justice
9. Director General of the Department of National Planning or a representative of the senior executive level appointed by the Director General to represent the relevant field
10. Director General of the National Institute of Education or a representative of the senior executive level appointed by the Director General
11. Dean of the Faculty of Education, Open University of Sri Lanka
12. Representatives from all 9 Provinces representing administrative authorities in-charge of ECCE matters
13. One member who has knowledge of early childhood and specific details with the above field appointed by the State Minister-in-charge of the subject of preschools
14. One member representing the university faculties of child psychology, child diseases, and special needs
15. Members who have expertise in early childhood development/child psychology/child diseases
16. Director of the National Secretariat for Early Child Development (NSECD), functioning as the Secretary to the NMRC

The primary function of the NMRC is to guide the formulation of policies and regulations, reforms and projects activities, promote compliance of key stakeholders with such policies and regulations and also facilitate the implementation reforms and projects launched while monitoring the ECCE services of the entire country through the process of the regular review.

1. The NMRC shall be the authoritative body to initiate the processes of review of policy documents prepared by the NEC and endorse them as a national policy.
2. The NMRC shall guide the NSECD in liaison with the NIE to prepare curricula and instructional material and teachers' guides for ECD teachers and teacher training centres. Such curricula shall be evaluated by the NMRC and endorsed as national guides.
3. The NMRC shall develop minimum standards for ECD centres, teacher training centres, and ECD material producers and establish a method of registration and monitoring at the provincial and national levels.
4. The NMRC shall facilitate the development of a system and procedure for quality assurance and accreditation of ECCE centres by the NEC and facilitate the implementation of the quality assurance and accreditation process through the National Quality Assurance Council (NQAC) established at the NEC and Provincial Quality Assurance Units (PQAUs) at the provincial level.
5. The NMRC shall advise and monitor the implementation of approved policies and strategies, curricula, and quality assurance and accreditation process through the NSECD through a process of regular review.
6. The NMRC shall facilitate NSECD to ensure progressive development of the ECCE sector by offering continuous professional development programmes for ECCE staff, promoting innovations and education research, establishing a process of self-evaluation, and monitoring of ECD centres at national and provincial levels.
7. The NMRC shall facilitate the NSECD to develop parents' education material in collaboration with the NIE and relevant health sector agencies, and disseminate them at national and provincial levels in collaboration with Provincial Administrative Entities of ECCE (PAEs of ECCE) and the health sector agencies.
8. The NMRC shall also entertain communication with grassroot-level stakeholders that include parents, teachers, community leaders, volunteer organizations and responsible officers and listen to their opinions, grievances and suggestion, and take such inputs into consideration in proposing modifications for existing programmes, and designing new interventions/programmes.

(B) NATIONAL SECRETARIAT FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT (NSECD)

The NSECD of the Ministry of Education /State Ministry in-charge of the subject of Child Affairs shall function as the central focal point and catalytic unit of the ECCE sector of the country and it shall function under the directions and technical advice and guidance of the NMRC.

1. The NSECD shall function as the coordinating agency in the process of evaluation of policy documents drafted by the NEC.
2. The NSECD shall collaborate and coordinate with the NIE in the process of ECE curriculum development and teachers' guide preparation, and shall also liaise with the NIE in the design and conduct of pre-service and in-service training programmes for preschool teachers.
3. The NSECD shall collaborate with the NIE and NEC and Provincial Administrative Entities in-charge of ECCE (PAEs of ECCE) in the development of minimum standards for ECCE centres, ECE teacher training centres and programmes, and ECD material production and submit them to the NMRC for review and approval.
4. The NSECD shall collaborate with the NEC to develop a quality assurance and accreditation framework (*i.e. criteria, elements, best practices and standards*) for the quality assurance and accreditation process of ECCE centres and ECCE teacher training centres, and facilitate the implementation of the quality assurance and

accreditation system by the Provincial Quality Assurance Units (PQAUs) under the guidance of the National Quality Assurance Council (NQAC) of the NEC.

5. The NSECD shall promote the implementation of the approved policy and strategies, curricula, and quality assurance and accreditation mechanism through its network of ECCE officers in liaison with the PAEs of ECCE, and shall regularly report to NMRC the progress of implementation of approved projects and programmes.
6. The NSECD shall liaise with the Provincial Administrative Entities of ECCE in implementing nationally prescribed regulations, standards and guidelines, policies and strategies, curricula, and instructional guides.
7. The NSECD shall develop strategic activity plans and programmes to ensure equity in the provision of programmes for continuous professional development of ECCE teachers of the entire country by coordinating with the national level training institutions while promoting and supporting provincial/regional level CPD activities
8. The NSECD in liaison with NEC and NIE shall promote research and innovations, and shall organize regular national-level research conferences in liaison with NEC, NIE and universities.
9. The NSECD shall liaise with the NIE and Ministry of Health in the development of parents' education material, and disseminate them at the national and provincial levels in collaboration with the PAEs of ECCE and the health sector agencies.

(C) PROVINCIAL MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATIVE ENTITIES ON ECCE

The Provincial Ministry of Education shall function as the authority in regulating all ECCE activities in the respective provinces in compliance and synchrony with national policies and guidelines. It shall take the responsibility of designing and promoting development activities and monitoring the progressive development of ECCE activities in their respective provinces. Provincial authorities are also required to contribute to the development of national policies and strategies.

1. The Provincial Administrative Entity (PAE) established for ECCE in each provinces shall be responsible for regulating, promoting and monitoring all ECCE activities.
2. The Head of the PAE of ECCE in the respective province should ensure the compliance of ECCE centres, teacher training centres and ECCE material production with the nationally prescribed curricula, regulations, standards, and guidelines.
3. The Head of the PAE of ECCE in the respective province shall ensure all the ECCE centres register their operations with the provincial authorities, and the process of registration shall be made through a process of simultaneous registration at the provincial and national levels.
4. The PAEs of ECCE shall liaise with the NSECD and collaborate very closely with provincial-level health, social service and child protection authorities in dealing with all matters related to the ECCE sector.
5. The PAEs of ECCE shall share information on registration, quality assurance assessments and all other activities with NSECD and participate in regular progress reviews at the central level.
6. The NSECD through PAEs of ECCE of respective provinces shall establish Provincial Quality Assurance Units (PQAUs) in respective provinces by adopting the NEC-prescribed quality assurance and accreditation system and accompanying guidelines.
7. Provincial Quality Assurance Unit (PQAU) of each province shall conduct quality assurance and accreditation

of ECCE centres under the guidance and assistance from the National Quality Assurance Council (NQAC) of the NEC.

8. The PAEs of ECCE shall facilitate provincial-level teacher training centres to conduct progressively evolving CPD programmes and education research activities in the respective provinces. They should harness opportunities to engage in national-level programmes for CPD provided and education research conducted by the NSECD, NIE, NEC, and higher education institutes.
9. The PAEs of ECCE shall implement parent education programmes at the provincial level in liaison with the ECCE centres.

(D) NATIONAL LEVEL ECCE CENTRES, TEACHER TRAINING CENTRES AND ECCE MATERIAL PRODUCTION INDUSTRY

1. All national-level ECCE centres, teacher training programmes and ECD material production industry should comply with national guidelines, the process of registration, quality assurance and accreditation as prescribed by the NSECD.
2. Experts attached to higher education institutes (HEIs) are expected to provide guidance on academic matters, teacher training and education provisions.
3. Experts attached to HEIs conducting ECCE programmes should collaborate with the NEC in the development of policies, with the NIE in the development of ECCE curricula and teachers' guides, and with the NSECD and NMRC on matters related to the regulation of the ECCE sector.

(E) PROVINCIAL LEVEL ECCE CENTRES, TEACHER TRAINING CENTRES AND ECCE MATERIAL PRODUCTION INDUSTRY

1. Provincial ECCE centres and teacher training centres and ECCE material production industry shall be regulated by the respective PAEs of ECCE.
2. The PAEs of ECCE shall ensure equity and standard of care provided by the ECCE centres through regular monitoring.
3. The PAEs of ECCE shall maintain a Provincial Database on ECCE centres which should be shared with the NSECD through an appropriate data sharing process.
4. The ECCE centres are required to adhere to nationally prescribed regulations, guidelines and standards, and the compliance will be monitored through regular quality and accreditation processes that shall be implemented by the respective the PQAUs of respective provinces under the guidance of the NQAC of the NEC.
5. All provincial teacher training centres and ECCE material production industry in the respective provinces should comply with national guidelines, the process of registration and quality assurance and accreditation.

(F) STAKEHOLDERS AT GRASSROOT-LEVEL

1. Officers in the health sector, social services, and local administrative authorities (Grama Seva Niladhari/Police) as well as parents, and volunteer organizations shall cooperate and collaborate with the PAEs of ECCE in the

implementation of the ECCE policy at the grassroot-level.

2. The PAEs of ECCE shall liaise with divisional level health, social service and child protection authorities working of the respective provinces at the grassroot-level and shall collaborate with the NSECD in dealing with all matters related to the ECCE sector.
3. Parents and other stakeholders at the ground level should be empowered to engage in ECCE activities and report their grievances and submit their suggestions to PAEs of ECCE, NSECD, and the Ministry in-charge of the subject of Child Affairs and Ministry of Education.
4. Parents should be provided with a handbook by the respective ECCE centres that contains the philosophy of ECCE, centre calendar and the curriculum adopted.
5. All ECCE centres are expected to provide parent the education material produced and issued by the NSECD to the parents, and they, the parents in turn are expected to abide by the prescribed guidelines.

PART IV - VOLUME II

**POLICY PROPOSALS AND
RECOMMENDED STRATEGIC
ACTIVITIES ON GENERAL EDUCATION**



1. STATUS REVIEW

1.1. Introduction

Sri Lanka has made an impressive progress in getting children of ages 5 to 16 years into primary and secondary school education and having them complete up to 11 years of compulsory schooling. Nonetheless, many appraisals conducted by international agencies such as World Bank (2016) and Asian Development Bank (2020) highlighted that Sri Lanka falls behind in terms of learning outcomes, which are vital for the high level industrial, manufacturing and service sector activities of a country aspiring to achieve upper-middle-income status in the medium-term and high-income status over the long-term.

Therefore, the main issue the country faces now is to lift the learning achievements of Sri Lankan students on par with those of upper-middle and high-income countries. In this regard, the general education system has a crucial role in laying the foundation of a child by imparting cognitive skills (*cognitive skills or cognitive abilities; the ways that one's brain remembers, reasoning, holds attention, solves problems, thinks, reads, learns, etc.*), psycho-motor skills (*hands-on skills, manual dexterity, practical skills, etc.*), and psycho-social and emotional skills (*resilience, achievement motivation, control, teamwork, confidence, initiative, ethics, etc.*) that are important for them to become productive participants in the modern globalized economy and be good citizens in adult life. Currently, the general education curriculum, teaching-learning, and assessment are insufficiently oriented to the promotion of not only the cognitive but also psycho-motor and psycho-social and emotional skills.

As a prelude to formulating policy proposals and recommending strategic activities, the policy planning team has proceeded to conduct a comprehensive status review including the identification of issues and gaps. A summary version of this review is given below.

1.2. Salient Features of General Education System

Sri Lanka adopts a 13-year general education system, starting at age five. School education is divided into four levels: primary, junior secondary, senior secondary, and upper senior secondary or collegiate levels.

Over the past 4 decades, Sri Lanka has made progressive improvements in the coverage of education provision to cater to the rising demand for student enrolment. This has culminated in achieving universal level enrollment, particularly in the early years of education. The number of government schools has increased from 8,585 in 1971 to 10,155 in 2020 and student enrolment has increased from 2,828,070 to 4,063,685 during the same period. The teacher population has increased from 94,858 in 1971 to 249,494 in 2020 and in parallel to that, the student: staff ratio has also improved from 30:1 to 16:1. A reflection of this progressive improvement is manifested in the increase in adult literacy rate, which has increased from 79% in 1971 to 91.7% in 2018.

Of the 10,155 government schools in 2020, 373 (3.7%) are generally called 'National Schools' coming directly under the purview of central government (*under the Ministry of Education*) while the remaining 9,782 (96.3%) are generally called 'Provincial Schools', coming under the purview of Provincial Ministries of Education.

The government schools are again classified into 4 types based on the level/grades offered: 3,999 (39.38%) schools offer education only up to Grade 5 (*Primary Schools*); 3,224 (31.75%) schools offer up to Senior Secondary level G.C.E. (O/L) examination; and 2,932 (28.87%) schools offer up to G.C.E. (A/L) examination (*Upper Senior Secondary or Collegiate level*). As of this data, out of 2,932 schools (28.87% of the total schools) that offer education up to G.C.E. (A/L) examination, only 1,000 schools (34.1% of upper senior secondary schools) offer all four streams (*science and mathematics, arts, commerce, and technology*) of education, while 1,932 (65.89% upper senior secondary schools) schools offer only arts and commerce streams of education for G.C.E. (A/L) examination.

1.3. Issues and Gaps

In the second part of the Status Review, based on a thorough literature review, the issues and gaps faced by the General Education (GE) sub-sector were analysed by classifying them into the following categories: (i) Types of education offerings and inequalities of science and mathematics, and language education opportunities to students, (ii) Teacher management and quality, (iii) Curriculum and content development, and documentation, (iv) Duration of school education, (v) Monitoring of student learning, (vi) Guidance and counselling service for students, (vii) Governance and management of general education system, (viii) Physical resources, learning environment, and teaching-learning process, (ix) Accountability and Quality Assurance Framework, (x) Medium of instruction, and (xi) Cost and financing of schools in Sri Lanka.

These issues indeed need urgent attention to make secondary education more relevant to national needs and to raise the learning achievements of Sri Lankan students on par with those of upper-middle and high-income countries.

1.3.1. Types of education offerings and inequalities of science and mathematics and language education opportunities to students

As explained above, public schools are divided into 'national schools' and 'provincial schools' and again they are classified into 4 types, based on the number of grades offered by the school and the types of subjects offered for the G.C.E. (A/L) examination. This organizational structure of the school system is both inequitable and detrimental to the progressive advancement of the general education sector, and for the country in general. Subject streams offered in small towns and rural areas are limited, thus reducing the opportunities offered to children in those areas to have access to the science and mathematics stream of education, and to learn English and other foreign languages. As a result, besides being inequitable, the distribution of collegiate level students is highly skewed towards the arts and humanities fields that are not in high demand in the labour market.

It is indeed encouraging to note that the successive Governments of Sri Lanka have recognized that this education structure is not only inequitable but also would create adverse effects for the future of the country. The most recent initiative to expand senior secondary education opportunities for rural students by upgrading 1,000 senior secondary schools throughout the country to offer all four G.C.E. (A/L) streams (*science and mathematics, arts, commerce, and technology*) is a noteworthy move. Nonetheless, much more efforts are needed to address this chronic issue in a coherent and sustainable manner.

1.3.2. Teacher education, management and quality

Many studies and review reports have highlighted that teacher management and teacher quality are undermined by many factors and issues.

1.3.2.1. Pre-service/Initial teacher training

At present, only two streams exist for providing pre-service/initial teacher education; namely National Diploma in Teaching (NDT) offered by the National Colleges of Education (NCoEs) and B.Ed. degree programmes offered by the universities. The B.Ed. study programmes offered in the Sri Lankan universities are not in line with the similar qualifications offered in other countries since the study programmes offered by universities do not offer specializations paths to train the graduates to teach at primary and secondary education. As reported by many previous policy documents and review reports, it appears that the annual output of these two systems is hardly adequate to meet the requirement of the country, particularly to cater to science subjects and languages.

1.3.2.2. Teacher recruitment and deployment and transfers

As of 2020 statistics, the general education system is catered by 249,494 teachers of which 48% are graduates, 49% are trained teachers, and the rest (3%) are untrained teachers, trainee teachers, and other categories of teachers. This together with the inconsistencies in teacher recruitment rules related to minimum qualifications, which occur mostly due to political influence, has led to shortcomings in the quality of teaching cadre, as well as the quality and standards of teaching and learning. Unfair deployment of teachers in different categories of schools (*with a surplus of subject teachers in urban areas, and shortages in rural schools*), and an acute shortage of teachers to teach the subjects of Mathematics, Science and English in most schools of the country, particularly in rural areas have created imbalances in education system. The recruitment of teachers at the school level, as happened in the past, had created additional problems as it prevented the rotation of competent teachers across the system. In addition, in this approach there may be no applications for schools in remote areas as such schools would not be attractive to potential applicants.

1.3.2.3. In-service training

In-service training programmes are offered as short-term training sessions by the NIE and Provincial Education Authorities (PEA) without a long-term perspective. Some programmes are need-based as they were related to some reforms introduced into the curriculum. However, most of the other programmes are not well-planned, well-structured and most of them are irrelevant to the work that they perform, and as such most of these training programmes are unattractive to participants.

1.3.2.4. Continuing professional development

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programmes assist practitioners to update their professional knowledge and skills. Several institutions, such as Faculties and Departments of Education in Universities and the NIE offer post-recruitment, professional development programmes for teachers. However, the number of programmes offered is far less than the demand and even the limited opportunities provided are not meeting the requirements as the scope and curricula of most programmes do not match with current needs.

1.3.2.5. Teacher service conditions and prospects

The current Teacher Service Minute is in force for more than 15 years, and it needs urgent revision to make the teaching profession attractive. In addition, the promotion system is also based on the length of service rather than qualifications and performance. As such, teachers lack incentives to invest in career advancement. At present, there is no institutional mechanism (*such as a regulatory professional body*) to promote professionalism in the teaching cadre.

1.3.3. Curriculum and content development, and documentation

Curriculum in general education is common to each grade in schools and designed centrally by the NIE to ensure nationwide uniformity of content and standard of education. Though Sri Lanka has changed its general education curriculum, content, methods of delivery, and assessments, to an extent, in keeping with global trends such as moving towards competency-based education, the teaching and learning and assessment approach and methods in the classroom have not changed much from the traditional knowledge-imparting model.

1.3.3.1. Curriculum development process and cycle

Serious shortcomings and flaws in curriculum designing and development have also been identified. One of the issues noted is the shorter duration of the curriculum cycle. At present, the curriculum reform cycle consists of 8 years, and it appears to be too short for a curriculum change, which involves assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the existing curriculum, designing a new curriculum, and pre-testing the new curriculum before implementation.

1.3.3.2. Curriculum content

Overcrowding of the curriculum with a heavy load of subject contents has been one of the major criticisms directed at general education. The distribution of contents across grades is also uneven. For a given grade, there appear to be overlaps of contents between subjects. This appears to have arisen due to the failure to pay attention to adopting a suitable measure to calculate the volume of learning and to estimate the maximum workload for different grades.

1.3.3.3. Mismatch of the curriculum with national education goals and basic competencies

Though the NEC has prescribed National Education Goals (1992) and Basic Competencies (2003) that should be achieved through general education, the current curriculum does not reflect these attributes adequately. Curriculum developers appear to have been more concerned with imparting subject specific-knowledge rather than aligning the contents, their delivery, and assessments with prescribed NEGs and basic competencies. As such, what is offered and taught has failed to inculcate desired goals, competencies, and values among students.

1.3.3.4. Shortcomings in curriculum documentation

There is a mismatch between the Teacher Instruction Manuals (TIMs) or Teachers' Guides (TGs) prepared by the NIE to guide the teachers in implementing the curriculum and the textbooks prepared by the Educational Publications Department (EPD). Another problem is both the teachers and students are misled by the discrepancies between the TGs and Textbooks, and this has led to confusion regarding the validity of some sources of content. Moreover, there have been many mismatches in the content given in English and Tamil translations of both the TGs and Textbooks compared with the original Sinhala versions.

1.3.4. Duration of school education

The duration of school education in Sri Lanka is 13 years, and it is within the global range of 12-13 years. This includes 5 years at the primary stage, 4 years in the junior secondary stage, and 4 years in the senior secondary stage. A child enters school at the age of 5-6 years, spends 13 years in the school, and with a sizable delay between the G.C.E. (O/L) examination and commencement of G.C.E. (A/L) classes. In this system, the average age of a Sri Lankan student at the time of graduation from the secondary school is 19 plus years. Nevertheless, the current structure and duration of school education in the country are in line with the school education systems adopted and practiced by more than 140 countries in the world.

1.3.5. Monitoring and assessment of student learning

Sri Lanka has a fairly well-established assessment system (*comprising of classroom assessments, public examinations, and large-scale national assessments*), but there is still a need for improving the enabling environment for ensuring the greater alignment between different assessments systems and technical aspects, especially for among classroom and large-scale assessments.

1.3.5.1. Classroom assessments

Classroom assessments include three forms of assessments: formative assessment, summative assessment, and School-Based Assessment (SBA). All forms of classroom assessments appear to have shortcomings. For example, though the formative assessment is adopted widely in Sri Lanka, it has descended to a level where the teacher administers formative assessment tests only for compilation of continuous assessment marks to make the total for a summative assessment. As regard summative assessments and SBAs, the assessment does not usually cover the full spectrum of prescribed content, teaching-learning methods, and intended learning outcomes or competencies, and the teachers continue to use “pen and paper” tests despite the availability of several better options.

1.3.5.2. Public examinations

Three public examinations, namely, Grade 5-scholarship examination, G.C.E. (O/L) examination, and G.C.E. (A/L) examination attract excessive attention of students, parents, and schools. Grade 5 scholarship examination is conducted for two purposes: to provide bursaries to talented students from economically disadvantaged families and to select students for secondary education in prestigious schools. However, the high level of competition among parents, tuition teachers, and some unwanted influence by media appear to create a high level of pressure on students. Another concern is that at the G.C.E. (O/L) examination which is intended to certify the subject-wise achievement of children after the end of education at the senior secondary level, many children fail in all subjects at the G.C.E. (O/L) examination after being in school for 11 years. Even though the G.C.E. (A/L) examination is supposed to measure student’s achievement at the end of the school education at the upper senior/collegiate level, the use of it as the criterion for selection of students to universities has made the school teaching reduced to preparing students to pass written examination papers. Further, the students, often due to undue pressure from parents, tend to forego co-curricular and extracurricular activities at school, and as a result, the school system has failed to ensure the holistic development of the child as envisaged by the National Education Goals and Basic Competencies prescribed by the NEC.

1.3.5.3. Shortcomings in question paper formats and test items in national examinations

Framework for 21st Century Learning emphasizes the skills, knowledge, and expertise that a student must acquire to succeed in work and life. Accordingly, the question paper formats and test items in the public examinations at senior secondary and collegiate level must be well balanced in terms of the three educational domains, namely, cognitive (*thinking*), affective (*social/emotional/feeling*), and psychomotor (*physical/kinaesthetic*) spheres. Nonetheless, this does not appear to happen, and there is growing public criticism in this regard. Both the curriculum and examination continue to run on traditional prototype models that give more weightage to memory-based, Lower Order Thinking (LOT) questions in classroom testing and public examinations at the expense of Higher Order Thinking (HOT) questions, which promote creativity and high cognitive abilities. Consequently, students obtain high grades by memorizing facts learned in school and tuition classes.

1.3.5.4. Large-scale national assessments

Since 2003, the National Education Research Evaluation Centre (NEREC) based at the University of Colombo has been conducting national assessments with samples of schools and students in Grades 4, 8, and 10 in selected subject areas. As of the results of national assessments conducted, in the early stages of education, learning achievement in Sri Lanka seems relatively good. However, at higher grades, such as Grade 8, there are concerns about the ability of students to master the curriculum and also about growing disparities in students among schools.

There is no data to make a comparison of Sri Lankan students’ performance with those of other countries as Sri Lanka has never participated in international assessments such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), and Progress in International Reading Literacy

Study (PIRLS). However, the limited studies conducted by the National Education Research and Evaluation Centre (NAREC) of University of Colombo have concluded that the learning outcomes in Sri Lanka, at least with respect to Mathematics and English as a foreign language do not meet the international standards.

1.3.5.5. Assessment competencies of teachers

Although the curricula of PGDE, B.Ed., and Diploma in Teaching programmes have an assessment component, they do not appear to impart enough competencies for teachers to satisfactorily assess students' learning.

1.3.5.6. Use of assessment information in system improvement

The most important outcome of the general education system is the educational attainment of the students, and it is an indicator of student performance. The assessment information could be used by Provincial and Zonal Authorities to improve the school system by paying more attention to poorly performing schools and providing teachers, infrastructure facilities, and quality inputs for effective curriculum delivery for such schools. Unfortunately, at present, this does not appear to take place in the system.

1.3.6. Guidance and Counselling Service for students

A Guidance and Counselling Service for schools was established in 2001 through the directives issued by the MoE Circular 2001/16 with the intention of maintaining the physical, mental, and social well-being of the students. Even though the School Guidance and Counselling (SGC) has been continued with some minor improvements under the provision of MoE Circular No.16 of 2006, as amended in 2013 through MoE Circular 6/2013, numerous studies and reports have stressed the need for making the school guidance and counselling service more effective to assist the students to resolve the issues pertaining to the personal, academic and career aspects to cope up within this competitive and complex society.

Some of the issues identified that need attention are; (a) absence of a professional approach and dedicated teacher cadre in relation to guidance and counselling service, (b) unavailability of professionally qualified officials in the policymaking and training bodies in relation to guidance and counselling aspects, (c) inadequacy of commitment and resources for Guidance and Counselling Service, (d) absence of regular flow of information on higher education and technical and vocational opportunities, career pathways, service conditions and promotional pathways, and career-related training places and institutions, (e) insufficient engagement of parents, and (f) lack of coordination among career education agencies.

1.3.7. Governance and management

1.3.7.1. Governance and management structure of general education

With the enactment of the 13th Amendment to the Constitution and the concurrent establishment of Provincial Councils, the governance structure of general education has become very complex. It has the elements of decentralization, delegation, and devolution of functions and powers between the Central Government and the nine Provincial Councils. There is still some degree of ambiguity as regards the delineation of powers and functions between the Centre and Provinces as some of the devolved subjects are still being handled by the MoE.

1.3.7.2. Issues in governance and management

Progress and quality improvement in general education has suffered from several drawbacks stemming from the shortcomings of the central and provincial governance and management. The main issues identified are; (a) weaknesses of the central governance structure, and lack of delineation of functions between the central and

provincial authorities, (b) weaknesses of the provincial structure and their adverse impact on schools, (c) lack of inter-agency communication and coordination at the central level, (d) shortage of competent staff at central and provincial level agencies, (e) lack of foresight and coordination in education planning, plan implementation and monitoring, (f) inadequate empowerment of schools to develop as distinct entities, (g) issues related to the current school classification system, (h) inadequacies in data compilation and use of information on education system in decision making, (i) issues related to the Ministry of Education, and (j) lack of rationality of cadre provisions in educational services.

1.3.8. Physical resources, learning environment, and teaching-learning process

Learning environment refers to “an educational approach and physical setting in which teaching and learning occur”. The learning environment plays a central role in the education of a learner as it provides the platform through which the learner acquires knowledge, skills, and attitude, which results in the acquisition of knowledge and skills and other desirable attributes required to succeed in work place and also to lay the foundation for in lifelong learning. The learning environment has three dimensions – physical, social (*interpersonal/intellectual/psychological*), and technological and didactic dimensions. In keeping with this philosophy, the general education environment must be equipped with required resources and modern teaching and learning methods and tools, complemented with best practices adopted by the management of learning institutions that uphold a child’s right to education and foster the development of children to their full potential. Besides physical facilities, safety provisions are also important for healthy learning environment.

1.3.8.1. Issues in physical resource and learning environment and teaching-learning process in Sri Lankan schools

The issues that need attention are identified as; (a) overcrowded and underutilized classrooms, (b) disparities in the provision of physical infrastructure facilities, (c) inadequate facilities in primary school learning, and (d) inappropriate classroom composition and arrangement in secondary schools.

1.3.8.2. Poor teaching-learning process

Although the prescribed teaching-learning process in schools should be learner-centered and activity-based, most classrooms have not adopted this approach. Instead, many teachers in most of the schools continue to practice a passive, teacher-centered, one-way process. Heavy examination-oriented learning system and resulting student attitudes and behaviour towards school education, and the unhealthy competition created in school education among students have exerted an undue burden on students, and it indeed has brought undesirable consequences in the education system and the society. Poor quality of inputs for teaching and learning in most schools, mainly due to lack of basic material inputs required for effective teaching-learning, and this situation prevails despite providing “Quality Improvement Grants” by the government.

1.3.8.3. School discipline

The United Nations promulgated the “Convention on the Rights of the Child” which has been ratified by almost all member countries including Sri Lanka. This has recognized the rights of children and elaborated on those aspects comprehensively. Thus, it is very important that, within the accepted guidelines, schools develop caring and gentle strategies to strengthen the disciplinary control of students. Further, the school authorities should create opportunities for students to participate in school activities and get them involved in the decision-making process of the school. It helps students to recognize their responsibility, and consider them as partners of the school system, and such approaches may invariably lead to the elimination of violence as well as apathy and aloofness among students.

1.3.9. Accountability and Quality Assurance

1.3.9.1. Accountability at the national level

The basic institutional foundation to deliver public education services exists in Sri Lanka, with responsibilities shared between the Central Government and Provincial Councils. There are good characteristics already established in public services, such as (a) input-oriented, line-item budgeting, (b) cadres of public education officials, such as principals, teachers, education administrators, teacher educators, etc., (c) opportunities for professional development and career progression for both academic and administrative staff, (d) cash accounting systems, (e) formal performance auditing by the Auditor General's Department, and (f) internal education system audits.

1.3.9.2. Accountability at the school level

The government is seeking at school level involvement in promoting accountability and quality enhancement in two ways: i) empowering schools and local communities through school-based management, and ii) monitoring schools through a quality assurance (QA) system.

School-based management programs: A programme called Programme for School Improvement (PSI), which is seeking to make individual schools more accountable through a School-based Management (SBA) initiative which has begun in 2006. This system enables schools to become self-managed, and with community involvement to improve the delivery of education services. The World Bank Report (2016) suggests that the PSI has been very popular among principals, teachers, parents, and also members of the local community, and it appears that all stakeholders support it tremendously.

Quality assurance process: Sri Lanka has adopted a QA model in schools based on the U.K. and Scottish models that assess school performance in eight areas: (i) student achievement; (ii) learning, teaching, and assessment; (iii) curriculum management; (iv) co-curricular activities; (v) student welfare; (vi) leadership and management; (vii) physical resource management; and (viii) school and community relations.

The QA system consists of two components - internal quality assurance (IQA) and external quality assurance (EQA), and both components, operate in annual cycles. A quality assurance system, in general, promotes a culture of continuous self-evaluation and quality improvement. Annual self-assessment of IQA review is the first step towards EQA review. After the annual internal QA self-assessment, the external review panel validates the results of the self-assessment and looks at dimensions of quality that go beyond the internal reviews. Though the IQA and EQA systems are in operation, there is a need for further tightening the link between the two processes and making it simpler, comprehensible, and manageable with the resources available in the school system.

1.3.10. Medium of instruction

There is consensus among many educationists that the mother tongue must be the natural medium of education, particularly in primary and secondary education. However, they also recognize the importance of mastering the link languages, particularly in multilingual societies, and for ease of communication in a rapidly globalized world.

Currently, students learn their first language (*Sinhala or Tamil*), second national language (*Tamil for Sinhala students and Sinhala for Tamil students*), and a link language (*English*). The medium of instruction in the primary and secondary stages is the mother tongue. However, a minority of students in the secondary schools learn some subjects in English medium and are said to be having bilingual or bimediu education.

1.3.10.1. Issues of teaching second national language and English as a link language

The issues that need attention in adopting and promoting bilingual education are; (a) shortage of second language teachers through the national language policy is well adopted across the school system, (b) inadequate competency of Sinhala and Tamil language teachers with a basic knowledge of linguistics to teach a language effectively, (c) unsuitability of curricular material for teaching the second language as the present curricular material is not being based on sound principles of teaching a second language, (d) poor quality of teaching of English language, and (e) lack of exposure to English from an early age by students despite the introduction of Activity-based Oral English (ABOE) from Grade 3 onwards in schools.

1.3.10.2. Issues of implementation of Bilingual Education

Bilingual Education (BE) refers to using two languages at varying degrees to study the subject matter. In the Sri Lankan context, the approach adopted in providing bilingual education is referred to as Bi-medium Education in which the students are given the choice of taking one or more selected subjects in English medium while the rest of the subjects are taken in their First Language (*Sinhala or Tamil*). The following issues that need to be addressed have been identified: (a) absence of a sound Bilingual Education Policy and discrepancies in implementing MoE directives on bilingual education in schools, (b) inadequacy of competent teachers to teach science and mathematics as well as the subjects related to social sciences such as history, geography and civic/citizenship education in English medium mainly in the rural areas, (c) disillusion and conflicts among student due to inequality of opportunities provided for bilingual education since only the best performers in the schools are given the option to study in the bilingual education, and (d) deficiencies in textbooks and other learning material in bilingual education mainly due to the fact that most of the texts are direct translations from Sinhala to English.

1.3.11. Cost and financing of schools in Sri Lanka

1.3.11.1. Public expenditure

Sri Lanka is one of the few countries in the world, which provides free education from kindergarten until completion of tertiary education. Therefore, the sole investment for education comes from the State. Amidst many competing priorities, the public expenditure on primary and secondary education has gradually increased over the years. Yet, the annual public investment in education has been around 2 % of GDP for the past several years, compared to an average of over 4 % of lower-middle-income countries and 5 % of upper-middle-income countries.

1.3.11.2. Household expenditure

Even though education is provided at no cost, the household spending on education is substantial. It goes to supplementary expenditures, such as the cost for books and stationery, transportation, private tuition fees, and the costs of attending private and international schools, boarding schools, colleges, and universities

1.3.11.3. Cost of private tutoring

As seen in many other countries, private tuition is a growing phenomenon. It accounts for one of the largest items in the household education budget. Though it is costly, fee-based supplementary instruction in academic subjects is widespread among all socioeconomic groups. Some studies in Sri Lanka and elsewhere indeed suggest that tutoring has positive effects on student academic achievement, with substantial effects for poorer households than for richer ones. However, tutoring is also having many negative effects on the education system and students.

1.4. Conclusion

Though the Sri Lankan general education system has made steady progress over the past seven decades, paving the way to produce world-class scientists, doctors, lawyers, engineers, and sportsmen, there are still issues and gaps that hinder the reaping of full benefits that the system potentially offers. In addition to developing a 'good citizen', these benefits mainly refer to producing a human resource base for tertiary education, middle-level technicians and service personnel, and skilled manpower for the formal and informal labour market.

In this context, the key areas which require the strategic interventions backed by sound national policies include, i) addressing the structural deformities and distortions that prevail in the general education system in terms of providing quality education in all subject streams in senior secondary and upper senior secondary/collegiate level education, ii) improving the quality and standards of education through modernizing curricula in all levels of education, with the adoption of learner-centered, technology-enhanced teaching-learning and assessment methods, iii) improving the learning environment with the provision of required physical and educational resources, and guidance and counselling services, iv) improving the competencies of teachers and promoting teacher professionalism, and streamlining teacher deployment, v) strengthening the quality assurance system, and vi) improving regulation, governance, and management of national education system backed by enhanced public and private funding and regulatory mechanisms.

These issues indeed need urgent attention to make secondary education more relevant to national needs and to raise the learning achievements of Sri Lankan students on par with those of upper-middle and high-income countries.

2. POLICY PROPOSALS AND RECOMMENDED STRATEGIC ACTIVITIES

Backed by a comprehensive status review, the policy proposals and recommended strategic activities are formulated in accordance with general education sector-specific 12 core areas and elements and accompanying directive principles elaborated in Part III of NEPF (2020-2030).

These 12 core areas include: i) Access, and Equity and Inclusiveness ; ii) Duration of School Education, Curriculum Design, Content, and Learning Outcomes; iii) Medium of Instruction, Teaching-learning Process, and Assessments; iv) Learners and Learner Support, Learning Environment and Learners' Welfare; v) Benchmarking and Quality Assurance; vi) Personality Development; vii) Civic Consciousness and Patriotism; viii) Financing of General Education; ix) Physical Resources – Teaching Facilities and Common Amenities; x) Physical Resources – Digital Infrastructure, Connectivity, Content, and Capacity; xi) Quality of Human Resources, and xii) Regulation, and Governance and Management .

This approach is taken, as stated previously, to ensure the policy planning process gives comprehensive coverage across all core areas and elements of the national education system while giving due consideration to issues and gaps lingering the progressive developments of the general education sector.

Core Area – GE 1: Access, and Equity and Inclusiveness

Directive Principles

- DP 1: The State assumes the responsibility of ensuring “Education for All”.
- DP 2: The State assures the provision of 13 years of guaranteed free education.
- DP 3: The State ensures full equity and inclusion in education by providing need-based support to all students to thrive within the education system, regardless of gender, race, religion or social status, geographical location, or disabilities.
- DP 4: All students, regardless of any challenges they may have, would be placed in age-appropriate general education classes to receive instructions, interventions, and support that enable them to meet success in the core curriculum.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-GE 1.1: Ensure equal access to all levels of school education

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The MoE shall take steps to enact legislation to legally prohibit parents or guardians from keeping their children without sending them to school.
- The MoE shall take measures for strict implementation of regulations pertaining to compulsory education to ensure all children from the ages 5 to 16 years attend schools.
- The state shall continue to offer bursaries and subsidies for needy children to facilitate their education.
- Non-formal Project Officers who are attached to the Zonal/Divisional Education Offices and respective School Development Societies to take the responsibility of examining the tendency of schooling of 5-16 year age group in the school zone/division, and to assure the total attendance of the group as well directing those that require alternative education pathways to non-formal education institutions (*such as Community Learning Centres and Open Schools*) and vocational training institutions.
- The MOE and the Provincial Ministries/Department of Education together with the NIE shall take steps to strengthen the Vocational Stream of Education or 13-years of guaranteed education programme offered for those who do not qualify to proceed to G.C.E. (A/L) classes in collaboration with the TVEC and TVET Institutes and award of a pre-vocational qualification at successful completion.

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The MoE shall take steps to enact legislation to make it compulsory for the parents and guardians of vulnerable children and children with special education needs to secure their educational rights.
- The MoE shall develop and implement a scientific and systematic method to identify the marginalized groups of children which includes children with special education needs and disabilities, children of displaced families, and children of poverty-stricken families. In this context, the following specific strategic approach is proposed:
 - Non-formal Education Project Officers assigned to Divisional Education Offices shall be given the responsibility to liaise with *Grama Niladaris*, *Samurdi* Development Officers, local health care workers, and school administrators in identifying; a) children with special education needs or disabilities, b) children who have no access to education in their respective catchment areas, c) children of migrant parents, and (d) marginalized children, and bringing them into the mainstream of education and/or channelling them to non-formal education or vocational and technical education.
- The MoE in liaison with the Ministry of Social Services shall take steps to provide special subsidies and welfare packages for children in need so as to facilitate their schooling/education.

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The MoE shall review the existing system of school categorization and construct a more simplified classification such as; i) Primary Schools (*from Grade 1-5*), ii) Secondary Schools (*from Grade 1-11 or Grade 6-11*), and iii) Senior Secondary Schools (*from Grade 1-13 or Grade 6-13*) as recommended by the NEC (2003) and also by many other policy reports where Senior Secondary category is functioning as the National Schools offering all 4 streams of education (*science and mathematics, arts, commerce, and technology*) at Grades 12 and 13, while Primary and Junior Secondary Schools functioning as feeder schools to Senior Secondary Schools.
- The MoE shall critically review the status of schools with less than 100 students and develop a method to rationalize the existence of those schools with the option of appropriately merging uneconomical and unproductive school units with viable schools with the provision of incentives for those affected by the rationalization and reorganization of the schools.
- The MoE shall implement a need-based and fair system of teacher deployment across all schools with provisions of appropriate incentives for those who are posted in small, isolated, and disadvantaged schools.
- Local political leadership, administrative authorities, and school communities shall take the initiative to seek private sector/philanthropic assistance for the development of needy schools in disadvantaged areas in terms of resources and patronage.

Core Area – GE 2: Duration of School Education, Curriculum Design, Content, and Learning Outcomes

Directive Principles

- DP 1: The State guarantees 13-years of school education (*i.e. 1-5 primary; 6-9 junior secondary, 10-11 senior secondary, and 12-13 collegiate years of education*) for every child.
- DP 2: The responsibility of the design and development of the national curriculum and instructional material in primary and secondary education should be a State function.
- DP 3: Pre-school, primary, and secondary education curriculum should be designed in conformity with the NEC prescribed National Education Goals, National Learning Competency Domains, and Level-specific Learning Outcomes.
- DP 4: School education must be broad-based by widening the span of subjects/learning areas offered to cater to current and emerging needs and promote the holistic development of learners.
- DP 5: The National School Curriculum should adopt a globally accepted system for recognizing the volume of learning and student achievements.
- DP 6: Curriculum design should ensure synergy and additive effects in curricula seamlessly across all levels of education from early childhood education to school education to higher education.
- DP 7: Curriculum in general education should not make any hard separations between arts and sciences, between curricular and extra-curricular activities, between vocational and academic streams, etc. to eliminate harmful hierarchies among, and silos between different areas of learning.
- DP 8: Curriculum in general education should offer flexibility and diversity from junior secondary to upper senior secondary level thus broadening the choices of study streams offered to students.
- DP 9: Curriculum at all levels must offer outcome-based (*i.e., constructively aligned with intended programme outcomes/subject learning outcomes*), multidisciplinary, integrated, and holistic education to build interest and competencies in science, mathematics, engineering, technology, humanities, and aesthetics.
- DP 10: All curricula should undergo periodic evaluation and continuous monitoring and revision.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-GE 2.1:

Broaden the study streams while guaranteeing 13-years of general education

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The MoE shall continue to adopt K-12 system of education (*i.e. kindergarten+12 years*) or 13 years of school span (*Grade 1 to 13*) that includes: Grade 1 to 5 primary education; Grade 6 to 9 junior secondary education; Grade 10 to 11 senior secondary education; and Grade 12 to 13 upper senior secondary/collegiate education.
- The MoE and the NIE shall consider broadening the choices of study streams offered at upper senior

secondary/collegiate-level (*Grade 12 and 13*) students. Recommended new streams include Information and Communication Technology, Visual and Performing Arts, and Sports and Health Sciences.

- The MoE shall set up at least one National School in each Education Division offering all G.C.E. (A/L) streams of education (*i.e., science and mathematics, commerce, arts, technology, and vocational streams*).
- The MoE shall take steps to streamline the existing School Guidance and Counselling Service (SGCS) operating across the school network so as to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of services provided by SGCS Units. The SGCS Units shall not only assist the students to overcome learning and psycho-social and emotional problems, but it must also ensure providing guidance and counselling to the students in choosing their optional subjects during the senior secondary education (*i.e. for G.C.E. O/L examination*) by taking into account the students' preferred study stream at the upper Senior Secondary level/ collegiate level (*i.e. for G.C.E. A/L examination*).
- The MoE shall strengthen the current vocational stream of education by offering it at least in all proposed 1000 national schools (in partnership with state technical and vocational training institutions), and offering them appropriate NVQ level entry qualification/pre-vocational qualification at the exit from the schools after 13 years of guaranteed education programme.
- The MoE shall conduct regular awareness programmes through print and electronic media to educate the children and parents about diverse study opportunities and career paths, and about the parents' responsibility of ensuring the children in school-going age to attend the schools and engage in all forms of school activities. This message must be reinforced by School Development Committees as well.

Policy-GE 2.2:

The National School Curriculum should contribute to the holistic development of a child to become a productive, caring, and patriotic Sri Lankan citizen

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The NIE shall consider the National Education Goals and National Learning Competency Domains and Level-specific Learning Competencies/Outcomes recommended by the NEC in this document (*NEPF 2020-2030: Part II – Vision for Education, National Education Goals and National Learning Competency Framework*) as the basis for the development of National Curriculum in order to ensure that it contributes to the holistic development of children to become 'productive, caring and patriotic citizens'.
- The NIE shall make sure that the curricula are prepared in an age-appropriate manner to suit the general level of intelligence of Sri Lankan children that will contribute to the balanced development of a child as specified by the NEC prescribed National Learning Competency Framework (NEPF-2020-2030).
- The NIE shall take steps to broaden the span of subjects (learning areas) offered for primary, junior secondary, and senior secondary education to accommodate learning areas dedicated for personality development and promotion of civic consciousness, aesthetic education, environment and sustainability development, health and physical education, information and communication technology, and education for the world of work.
- The NIE shall take steps to separate the subjects/learning areas into two categories – core/essential learning areas and supplementary/further learning areas. In this approach, the school curriculum should consist of core and supplementary components.
- The NIE shall take steps to adopt a modular curriculum to facilitate the ease of curriculum implementation,

reduce the burden on students, and adopt a globally accepted approach, terminology, and norms of curriculum (*Refer to Core Area – GE 2; Policy-GE 2.3 for more technical details*).

- The NIE shall consider offering flexibility in general education by allowing the students to select supplementary subjects to suit the learners' interests, thus enabling the students to choose from a basket of courses/modules, based on their preferences.
- The MoE shall adopt the policy to give more flexibility for students in choosing their G.C.E. A/L subjects by allowing a maximum of two subjects from selected areas of specialization to be stipulated by Faculties of Universities for admission purposes while allowing the third subject to be selected from the full range of subjects according to the student's choice, as recommended by the NEC in 2003 and 2014 reports.
- The NIE in developing all curricula and syllabi shall consider the international benchmarks set by other countries offering the same qualifications in terms of the volume of learning and the depth of learning associated with each subject (*Refer to Core Area – GE 2; Policy-GE 2.3 for more technical details*).
- All curricula and syllabi developed by the NIE should be subjected to external review.

Policy GE 2.3:

The National School Curriculum should adopt a globally accepted system for recognizing the volume of learning and student achievements

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The NIE shall take steps to structure the general education curriculum in the following lines:
 - Contents of a given subject area should be divided into learning units/modules based on a rational basis (*i.e. where similar learning contents are grouped together*). In doing so, a step-wise build-up of learning from one module to the next module should be ensured (*i.e. prerequisites for a given module should be determined based on the content of previous modules*). This will ensure that the students will not forget (*or learn superficially*) the core content areas,
 - Volume of learning of each module/course shall be defined by adopting the credit currency system in line with the Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework (SLQF). In this system, 1 credit is equivalent to 50 notional hours that include face-to-face teaching-learning, formal assessments, self-studies, time spent on assignments, etc.,
 - Outcomes of assessments at the end of the semester or term/each year of the different learning stages (*i.e. junior secondary, senior secondary, collegiate/upper senior secondary*) must be expressed as a cumulative expression of student performance by adopting Grade Point Average (GPA) system. The GPA should be calculated by adopting a globally accepted weighted average of modular credits achieved in each term/year of each stage of learning, and
 - Offer a certification completion to students with transcripts at the successful completion of each stage of education – primary, junior secondary, senior secondary, and upper senior secondary/collegiate levels.

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The NEC and the NIE shall jointly review the existing guidelines of general education curriculum revision, including the current curriculum reform cycle of 8 years, and adopt appropriate reforms through a research-based approach.
- Before starting a new cycle, a comprehensive study of the implementation of the ongoing curriculum should be carried out by the NEC in liaison with the NIE, NCoEs, and Education Faculties of Universities with findings being submitted for public discussion, and finally the NEC shall make specific recommendations for the next cycle of curriculum revision.
- The MoE through the NIE should develop an effective training mechanism to replace the 'Cascade Model' currently adopted by the NIE to train all involved in implementing the school curriculum effectively.
- The NIE shall ensure that a continuous supply of information on new developments in all subjects, communicated to teachers through the in-service advisors' network, and through Teachers' Guides and textbooks.

Core Area – GE 3: Medium of Instruction, Teaching-Learning Process, and Assessments

Directive Principles

- DP 1: Mother Tongue (*Sinhala/Tamil*) should continue to be the medium of instruction at primary and secondary levels.
- DP 2: Provision should be made available for Sinhala speaking children to learn Tamil and Tamil speaking children to learn Sinhala.
- DP 3: Teaching activity-based functional English should be encouraged from Grade 1, and the formal teaching of English should be made compulsory from Grade 3 to 13.
- DP 4: Bilingual or Bi-medium delivery should be made as an option at the secondary education level.
- DP 5: The teaching-learning process must emphasize conceptual understanding and acquisition of higher-order cognitive skills rather than rote learning and learning-for-examinations.
- DP 6: The teaching-learning process shall embrace as much as possible learner-centered and activity-based teaching-learning methods to promote experiential/authentic learning and self-regulated learning skills (*that enables the learner to construct her/his knowledge and skills*) through active participation in the teaching-learning process.
- DP 7: Curricula delivery should adopt a blended mode of teaching-learning approach with the extensive use of technology, along with the provision of adequate opportunity for hands-on learning and open-ended exploration using ICT applications.

- DP 8: School children should be educated to keep themselves safe from internet threats.
- DP 9: Teaching-learning and assessment process should conform to quality standards and guidelines prescribed in the Teachers' Guides.
- DP 10: Evaluation of students' achievement should be based on both formative and summative assessments to achieve all intended learning outcomes while ensuring the validity and reliability of assessments.
- DP 11: School-based Assessments must be adopted as a tool to make learning at school mandatory, enjoyable, exciting, and rewarding and it must be blueprinted to the National Learning Competency Framework prescribed by the National Education Commission.
- DP 12: The outcomes of the School-based Assessments should be considered in determining the overall performance of students at the two national examinations – at the G.C.E. (O/L) and G.C.E. (A/L) Examinations.
- DP 13: Assessment of learning at Grade 5 scholarship examination, G.C.E. (O/L) Examination, and G.C.E. (A/L) Examination shall be a State function.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-GE 3.1:

Mother tongue (Sinhala/Tamil) should continue to be the medium of instruction at primary and secondary levels with bilingual education is offered as an option at the secondary level

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The MoE should continue the current policy that the mother tongue is the medium of instruction at the primary level while teaching English as a compulsory subject from Grade 3 to Grade 13 with an emphasis on strengthening oral English to facilitate the development of communication skills.
- The NEC in liaison with relevant stakeholders shall undertake a comprehensive review of current practices of implementation of bilingual education and formulate a comprehensive policy and strategic framework on bilingual education and teaching of English as the second language.
- The MoE by taking into consideration of the policy and strategic framework that would be recommended by the NEC based on the proposed review, shall take steps to issue comprehensive circular instructions to promote bilingual education while taking steps to improve English language standards of school children in an equitable manner across all schools in all regions.
- The MoE should promote bilingualism throughout the country by using English as the medium of instruction in selected subjects such as mathematics, science, information technology in the secondary grades, year by year from Grade 6.
- The MoE should continue the current practice of students of secondary grades having the option to; (a) study any subject in the English medium in the G.C.E. (O/L) and G.C.E. (A/L) grades subject to the availability of teachers, and (b) sit the G.C.E. (O/L) and G.C.E. (A/L) examinations in the medium of their choice.
- The MoE should take steps to strengthen the multilingualism - Sinhala speaking children to learn Tamil and Tamil speaking children to learn Sinhala while both groups learning English as an international language.

Policy-GE 3.2:

Promote new approaches including STEAM education and blended mode of teaching and learning thus allowing every child to derive real satisfaction from learning and reach her/his full potential

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The MoE together with the NIE, NCoEs, and Universities shall take steps to promote the adoption of STEAM education¹ and learner-centered and authentic teaching-learning approaches, and methods and tools in school education to make learning a rewarding, purposeful, and joyous experience.
- The MoE shall ensure that the teacher education providers (*i.e. NIE, NCoEs, and the Universities*) take the steps to orient the teachers with a suitable pedagogy to adopt STEAM education approach and blended mode of teaching-learning methods and tools with judicious use of appropriate ICT-based tools.

Policy-GE 3.3:

The curricula, syllabi, teachers' guides, and other learning-teaching material should conform to prescribed specifications

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The Educational Publications Department (EPD) and the NIE together shall streamline the process of preparing the teaching-learning material and teachers' guides and textbooks concurrently in all three languages by expert panels comprising subject specialists, language specialists, and textbook designers.
- The NIE shall ensure the Teachers' Guides (TGs) consist of teaching methodology and appropriate assessment methods including the guidelines on curriculum adaptation that allows the teachers to make necessary adaptations to suit the specific situations and to prepare lesson of a given subject to achieve as many as possible the age-specific National Learning Competencies/Outcomes prescribed by the NEC (NEPF 2020-2030).
- The EPD, in writing textbooks, shall ensure that the textbooks are closely aligned with the prescribed content, intended learning outcomes, and suggested methodologies given in the curriculum and the Teachers' Guides.
- The EPD and the NIE should take action to develop teaching-learning material including textbooks for all G.C.E. (A/L) examination subjects.

1. *STEAM education which stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics Education is an approach to learning that uses Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts, and Mathematics as access points for guiding student inquiry, dialogue, and critical thinking.*

Policy-GE 3.4:

Strengthen the school-based assessments process to improve its relevance, reliability, and validity, and its outcomes must be taken into consideration in determining the students' performance at the national examinations

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The MoE in liaison with the NEC, NIE, and Department of Examinations shall take steps to blueprint School-based Assessments (SBAs) to National Learning Competency Framework prescribed by the NEC (NEPF 2020-2030).
- The MoE shall take steps through NCoEs, NIE, and Universities to train teachers on SBA procedures – modern and alternative assessment methods (*i.e. use of presentations, reports, projects, assignments, portfolios, etc.*).
- The MoE shall work in liaison with the NIE, Department of Examinations, and Provincial Departments of Education to work out the technical and logistics aspects in conducting SBAs to ensure the relevance, reliability, and accuracy.
- The MoE and NIE shall consider the introduction of SBA outcomes as an element in determining the students' performance at the national examinations with the implementation of the next cycle of curriculum revision that is scheduled in 2023/2024.

Policy-GE 3.5:

Review the formats of Grade 5 Scholarship Examination, and G.C.E. (O/L) and G.C.E. (A/L) Examinations

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The MoE together with the NEC, NIE, and DoE shall take steps to review the current Grade 5 Scholarship Examination and introduce appropriate reforms to eliminate its undesirable effects.
- The NIE and the Department of Education (DoE) should standardize the G.C.E. (O/L) and G.C.E. (A/L) examinations and qualifications by benchmarking them with similar examination and qualifications offered by other countries in terms of the number of subjects required, notional learning hours (*i.e. the sum of classroom face to face teaching and practical hours, guided learning hours and self-learning hours*) and the assessment time required for each subject.
- The DoE shall ensure that the question papers are constructively aligned with the intended learning outcomes stated in the curricula to achieve the final aim of the assessment of student learning.
- The MoE shall take steps together with the NEC, NIE, and DoE to develop a policy and the framework for the use of School-based Assessment (SBA) marks in determining the grades of G.C.E. (O/L) and G.C.E. (A/L) subjects.
- The MoE together with the DoE and the NIE shall adopt a policy to implement the following structure for all subjects in G.C.E. (O/L) examination: Paper - I in any subject will assess 'Minimum Competencies' and the Paper-II of the subject will assess the 'Higher Order Abilities and Competencies', and the contents and the competencies of the respective papers shall be defined in the syllabus.
- The MoE together with the DoE and the NIE shall adopt a policy to make sure that the subject of General English is taught and tested appropriately at the G.C.E. (A/L) examination.

- The MoE together with the DoE and the NIE shall adopt a policy to restructure the current Common General Paper at the G.C.E. (A/L) examinations by including the test items to assess the competencies in the mother tongue and linked language, English.
- The MoE shall introduce a best practice in the form of a new quality control mechanism for the NIE to independently verify whether the question papers have assessed the expected learning outcomes to an appropriate level as prescribed by the respective syllabi. Since sending the paper to the NIE before an exam will be an exam security/confidentiality concern, the DoE itself should do this by preparing an Exam Blueprint or a Table of Specifications and submitting them to the NIE after the end of each examination. Subsequently, after verifying it, the Director General of the NIE shall submit an annual report to the Commissioner General of Examinations evaluating the alignment of the question papers in the G.C.E. (O/L) and G.C.E. (A/L) examinations with the expected learning outcomes at the end of each of examination.
- The MoE together with the DoE and the NIE shall find ways to reduce the current time gap between holding the G.C.E. (O/L) and G.C.E. (A/L) examinations and releasing the results to ensure uninterrupted education for students.
- The MoE shall ensure that reporting of grades for subject-based qualifications of G.C.E. (O/L) and G.C.E. (A/L) are in line with internationally recognized norms.

Core Area – GE 4: Learners and Learner Support, Learning Environment and Learners' Welfare

Directive Principles:

- DP 1: Education should be provided in an environment with minimum requirements to facilitate learning.
- DP 2: Education shall pave the way for every individual to reach the full potential to be successful in the world of life including to make him/her productively employable in the 'world of work'.
- DP 3: Education must be aimed at fostering the unique capabilities of each student, by sensitizing teachers as well as parents to promote each student's holistic development.
- DP 4: Education must be flexible, so that learners have the ability and guidance to choose their learning pathways and programmes, and thereby choose their own paths in life according to their talents and interests.
- DP 5: Education must equip the learners with the necessary abilities to learn on their own to suit the diverse personal and societal requirements, within a rapidly changing world, following the principles of reflective practice and lifelong learning.
- DP 6: Achievement of broader education goals at the primary and secondary levels should be promoted as a tri-patriate alliance among students, teachers, and parents.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-GE 4.1: All schools should be provided with basic facilities, classroom space, and special spaces in keeping with the norms adopted by the Ministry of Education

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The NEC in executing its mandate shall prescribe norms for basic facilities of schools (*i.e. classrooms, teaching laboratories, library, ICT facility, play areas, restrooms, electricity, water, etc.*) at primary and secondary levels and they should be revised periodically in keeping with advances in technology.
- The MoE and Provincial Ministries/Departments shall take steps to ensure all schools across the country are provided with minimum facilities (*i.e. physical, human and teaching-learning resources*) in accordance with the norms as defined by the NEC.
- The MoE and Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education shall take steps to modernize the design of school infrastructure to facilitate the adoption of student-centered teaching-learning approach and application of interactive teaching-learning methodologies.
- School Development Society with the help of the Zonal Education Office, in case of needy rural schools, shall undertake regular monitoring and upgrading of the basic facilities as required by the school, and in accordance with norms prescribed by the NEC.
- The MoE together with Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education shall takes steps to review the infrastructure facilities, human resources, teaching-learning aids, and resources as against the norms prescribed by the NEC and take steps to address the identified deficiencies.
- The MoE shall issue circular instructions to limit the number of students in a class to 35 and the number of parallel classes per grade to not more than 6 to limit the school size to a manageable level.

Policy-GE 4.2: Create a caring, vibrant, safe, and resourceful school environment conducive for the holistic development of children

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The MoE together with the NEC and NIE shall take steps to prescribe guidelines and standards on the psycho-social climate of the school and develop an oversight mechanism to check compliance with prescribed guidelines, and issue circular instructions for compliance by all schools.
- Zonal Education Office together with the School Development Committees shall assist the schools to take steps in accordance with the MoE circular instructions to create and provide a psycho-social climate that is caring, safe, and conducive to student participation in curricular and co-curricular activities.
- The MoE shall develop and issue a Codes of Ethics and Conduct for both the students and staff that would improve the conduct of students and staff, and help to adopt corrective strategies and measures to maintain discipline in schools and eliminate unruly conduct of students and degrading forms of punishments from schools.
- School Development Societies shall ensure that all students are provided with an opportunity to participate

in the decision-making process on school matters concerning them.

- The MoE shall develop a grievance redress mechanism that could go beyond the school administration level, when necessary.

Policy-GE 4.3:

Promote parental involvement in children's education and development to ensure holistic development, better performance, and higher achievements

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The MoE shall prescribe updated guidelines for the establishment and operation of School Development Societies (SDSs), and take steps to make it compulsory for each and every school to establish and operate SDSs.
- The MoE shall launch a national campaign emphasizing that the parents are partners of the school and their involvement is valued.
- The MOE shall issue guidelines to establish and foster productive parent-teacher interactions, in order to promote children's interest in learning and to develop good parenting skills to meet the basic obligations of family life.
- All schools together with SDSs shall take steps to offer opportunities for students to engage in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, and also promote good health and personal hygiene habits, and etiquette among students.

Core Area – GE 5: Benchmarking and Quality Assurance

Directive Principles

- DP 1: The concepts of quality and quality culture should be instilled at all levels of the general education system through nationally prescribed best practices.
- DP 2: The quality culture must be institutionalized within the schools and internalized among the administrators, teachers, support staff, and students.
- DP 3: Quality assurance must consist of internal and external components and the outcome of the process must be followed up by the relevant authorities to address the identified deficiencies and gaps.
- DP 4: Quality assessment must cover a wide range of operations of schools ranging from management and operational systems, human and physical resources, learning environment and learner support services, academic curriculum and content, teaching-learning and assessment processes, and learning outcomes with the assignment of differential weightages for core and auxiliary standards.
- DP 5: Quality assurance domains, criteria and elements, and standards must be well designed to make it easy for stakeholders to understand and interpret, and value them.
- DP 6: Students and parents should be recognized as the most relevant source of feedback in assessing quality, and quality improvement of the teaching-learning process and student learning outcomes, and the overall

functioning of the school.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-GE 5.1: Quality assurance system and the process should be regularly reviewed and modified where necessary based on current and emerging needs and the feedback on the existing process

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The MoE shall take steps to appoint a committee with representatives from the MoE, NEC, NIE, and Provincial Authorities to review and revise the current QA system. The revisions should include:
 - redefining of roles and functions of the Centre (*Ministry of Education*), Province (*Zonal Education Office*), and School in the QA system and process;
 - redefining the quality assurance framework (*Domains, criteria and elements, standards, and indicators*) to adequately cover inputs, processes, and outputs;
 - rewording the criteria and elements, and standards to avoid ambiguities; and
 - adopting appropriate internal and external review process and cycles.

Policy-GE 5.2: Quality Assurance System must be driven by a well-structured institutional mechanism with built-in procedures/mechanisms for post-review follow-ups

Recommended Strategic activities

- Restructure the quality assurance management system in the following lines:
 - Establish a Quality Assurance Council for General Education (QACGE) under the purview of the Ministry of Education for which the Management and Standards Unit of the Ministry of Education shall function as the administrative unit of the QACGE. It shall be chaired by the Secretary of Education or DG/ Education and should consist of 7 members with expertise in QA in GE, HE, and TVET, appointed by the Minister of Education.
 - Establish Quality Assurance Units at Zonal Education Office level headed by a Director/Additional Director taking responsibility of implementing QA programmes at Zonal Level.
 - Establish an Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQA Cell) in each school headed by the principal or a deputy principal/ senior teacher to promote institutionalization and internalization of best practices in all aspects of school administration and academic activities.
 - The IQA Cell should have the widest possible participation of teachers, administrative/clerical staff, students, members of the school development society, and support staff to ensure that the quality assurance process permeates beyond the teachers.
 - A Web-based dashboard carrying information on the quality assurance activities of each school should be maintained by the Zonal Education Office. This dashboard must be updated at least annually to

reflect each school's progress in addressing the recommendations of each of the IQA and EQA cycles.

- The MoE shall formulate a new circular with amendments introduced to the QA system to replace current Circular No. 31 of 2014.
- The MoE and Provincial Ministries of Education shall institutionalize a support system to assist those schools which perform poorly as well as for addressing the deficient areas of the average performing schools.
- The MoE and Provincial Ministries of Education shall introduce a reward system to recognize and reward high-performing schools.

Core Area – GE 6: Personality Development

Directive Principles

- DP 1: School education must ensure the all-round personality development of students by promoting cognitive, physical, and psychosocial development of students while promoting behavioural, emotional, social, and spiritual maturity and imbuing values, morals, and ethics.
- DP 2: School education ensure inculcation of life skills such as communication, cooperation, teamwork, leadership, managerial and entrepreneurial skills, perseverance, and resilience.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-GE 6.1: General education shall be aimed to train all students with level-specific competencies with cognitive, psychomotor, and psychosocial skills

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The NIE shall ensure that curricula and Teachers' Guides of each level of general education adopt outcome-based, student-centered teaching-learning and promote the acquisition of level-appropriate competencies/outcomes prescribed by the National Learning Competency Framework (NEPF 2020-2030) that outline the level-specific cognitive, psycho-motor, and psychosocial competencies.
- The NIE shall take steps to introduce a new course module titled "Personality and Civic Consciousness" from the beginning of the next curriculum cycle (*i.e. from 2023/2024*) that runs as a strand from Grade 1 to Grade 10. The Personality component of this module shall provide age-appropriate teaching-learning components (*both curricular and co-curricular activities*) aimed at providing academic, intellectual, and practical training to imbue students with emotional, social, and spiritual maturity, and values, morals, and ethics. (*This is linked to the Policy-GE 7.1 as well*).
- The NIE shall further ensure that each student maintains a portfolio of learning that showcases both the work within the said strand and the work within the core subject areas that promote emotional, social, and spiritual development.

Policy-GE 6.2:

General education must facilitate students both through the curricular, and co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, the acquisition of life skills that include adaptive and positive behaviour that enable them in their adult lives to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of life.

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The MoE shall take steps to ensure all senior secondary and upper senior secondary schools having classes from Grade 10 to Grade 13 set up fully functional School Guidance and Counselling Service (SGCS) that provides assistance and guidance to resolve students' problems and concerns, and career counselling and career information.
- The MoE in liaison with the NEC, NIE, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Sports and Provincial Ministries/ Departments of Education shall take steps to design and introduce a suitable physical fitness programme as a compulsory co-curricular activity that runs as a continuous strand from Grade 1 to Grade 13.
- All schools must promote the establishment of student societies/circles/clubs so as to promote students' engagements in organizing and conducting social, sports, and cultural events/programmes, student debate competitions, student excursions/expeditions, etc., that are focused on inculcating a whole range of life skills - leadership, initiative, teamwork, problem-solving, reasoning, critical thinking, creative thinking, communication, and collaborative sharing, and nurturing them to flourish rather than stifling their self-esteem.

Core Area – GE 7: Civic Consciousness and Patriotism**Directive Principles**

- DP 1: Education must imbue civic consciousness among students - empathy, respect for others, cleanliness, courtesy, democratic spirit, the spirit of service, respect for public property, logical and rational thinking, liberty, responsibility, accountability, pluralism, equality, and justice.
- DP 2: Education must instil nationalism and patriotism to promote affection towards Sri Lanka as the place of birth, its history, culture, and knowledge systems and traditions.
- DP 3: Education must act as a platform for students to learn and become aware of other religions, traditions, and beliefs, and foster ethnic harmony and social cohesion.

Policies and Strategies**Policy-GE 7.1:**

Education must imbue civic consciousness among all students

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The NIE shall take steps to introduce a new course module titled "Personality and Civic Consciousness" from the beginning of the next curriculum cycle (*i.e. from 2023/2024*) that runs as a strand from Grade 1 to Grade

10. The civic consciousness component of the module shall provide age-appropriate teaching-learning components (*both curricular and co-curricular activities*) aimed at imparting human and constitutional values like liberty, empathy, respect for others, personal etiquette, courtesy, democratic spirit, the spirit of service, respect for public property, logical and rational thinking, responsibility, accountability, pluralism, and equality (*This is also linked to the Policy-GE 6.1 as well*).

- The MoE shall ensure the school calendar of all levels of general education must include dedicated co-curricular and extra-curricular activities to facilitate student engagement in activities that promote civic consciousness such as engagement in school societies, community services, volunteer services etc.

Policy-GE 7.2:

Education shall function as a vehicle to promote affection of students towards their motherland, Sri Lanka - as their place of birth or residence, its history, culture, and knowledge systems and traditions

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The NIE shall ensure that the curriculum fulfills the objectives of developing patriotism, respect for others, social harmony, moral values, sustainable living, good health, a spirit of inquiry, and the use of all senses.
- The MoE working together with the NEC, NIE and Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education shall take steps to issue curricular instructions and guidelines to all schools to take steps to design and introduce a wide variety of student-centered activities into the annual calendar of school that are aimed at imbuing human value such as allegiance to motherland, respect for other religions and ethnic groups, and respect for diverse believe practices and cultures.

Core Area – GE 8: Financing of General Education

Directive Principles

- DP 1: Free education is guaranteed from kindergarten to university education.
- DP 2: Public expenditure on education is guaranteed to meet the increasing demand while improving the need-based fund distribution and efficiency of utilization.
- DP 3: Financial assistance for needy students is guaranteed to ensure equity and inclusiveness.
- DP 4: Encouragement of true philanthropic private and community participation in education by providing financial/tax incentives within a conducive regulatory framework to establish and operate education institutions on a not-for-profit basis.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-GE 8.1:

Incremental increase of public investment in education over the next 10 years to reach the levels of comparable countries – that is up to 4.5% of the GDP or above 10% of the annual government expenditure while promoting private investment into school education

Recommended Strategic Activities

- Fund allocation by the MoE and Provincial Ministries of Education to schools must be based on a rational formula. The system-wide school-funding formula, the Norm-Based Unit Cost Resource Allocation Mechanism (NBUCRAM) which was introduced in 2000 and which is currently in disuse must be reconsidered with required modifications for this purpose by emphasizing a mechanism to ensure that all schools receive allocated funds.
- The government grant allocated annually through the MoE and Provincial Ministries of Education should be increased and the allocations must be provided to schools in a phased-out manner over 12 months to ensure efficient utilization by schools.
- The MoE shall devise a suitable mechanism to recover at least part of the cost of textbooks and school uniforms from those who could afford them while giving the full subsidy for those who are in real need of such assistance.
- The MoE and Provincial Ministries of Education shall optimize the fund allocation, disbursement, and efficiency of utilization by rationalizing and restructuring the school types, from the current 4 Types (1AB, 1C, Type 2 and Type 3) to a more rational 3 types – Primary (1-5 Grades), Secondary (1-11 or 6-11 Grades) and Senior Secondary (1-13 or 6 to 13 Grades), where the first two categories function as feeder schools for the Senior Secondary Schools located at least one per Education Division and with offering education in all four streams of G.C.E. (A/L) education (*i.e. science and mathematics, arts, commerce, and technology*) (*This aspect is also prescribed under policy 1.3*).
- The State shall continue to provide financial assistance for education in the form of subsidies and bursaries to needy children.
- The MoE and Provincial Ministries of Education, through the administrative circular instructions shall grant approval for schools to generate funds (*through the means as school fees, philanthropic contributions, fundraising campaigns, etc.*) at the school level to supplement government grants. The responsibility of managing such income-generating activities and funds disbursement should be granted to the School Development Societies.

Policy-GE 8.2:

Promote private investment in general education by providing financial incentives and creating a conducive regulatory framework to encourage the private sector to establish and operate education institutions on not-for-profit basis

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The MoE shall frame regulatory framework and guidelines to facilitate the private investors to establish and operate not-for-profit education institutions with multi-ethnic and multi-religious flavour.
- The NEC in liaison with the MoE shall prescribe standards and guidelines for private education institutions and undertake regular monitoring and certification of such schools for compliance with prescribed guidelines and standards.
- The State through the MoE shall offer matching grants for registered and certified private education institutions to encourage private sector investment in education.

Core Area – GE 9: Physical Resources – Teaching Facilities and Common Amenities**Directive Principles**

- DP 1: All education institutions, irrespective of geographical location and student number, must be provided with minimum requirements of teaching facilities.
- DP 2: All education institutions, irrespective of geographical location and student number must be provided with all required common amenities.
- DP 3: All education institutions which accommodate students with special educational needs must be equipped with the required infrastructure and teaching facilities to cater to such students.
- DP 4: Education institutions situated in rural locations must be provided with accommodation facilities for teachers.

Policies and Strategies**Policy-GE 9.1:**

All schools, irrespective of geographical location and student number, must be provided with minimum infrastructure requirements for teaching-learning and common amenities

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The MoE together with Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education and in liaison with the Zonal Education Office network shall take steps to review the existing infrastructure facilities in school and prescribe norms and standards in alignment with the NEC-prescribed norms and standards for infrastructure facilities and allied resources – such as classrooms, teaching laboratories, ICT facilities, library, common rooms, restrooms,

play areas, water, electricity, sanitary and security services, etc., including the provisions for accommodating the children with special educational needs, and formulate and issue circular instructions to promote greater compliance with the prescribed norms and standards.

- The principals of all schools in consultation with the School Development Societies under the guidance of the Divisional Education Office must develop an Infrastructure-Master Plan for the school by taking into consideration the guidelines given by the MoE through circular instructions.
- The MoE and Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education shall take steps to allocate funds based on the proposals and plans submitted by schools for the development of deficient infrastructure facilities and common amenities, including accommodation for teachers in rural areas and minimum requirements to accommodate students with special educational needs.
- The MoE and Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education shall take steps to provide repair and maintenance grants for all schools based on the estimated annual requirement or as assessed by the Norm-Based Unit Cost Resource Allocation Mechanism.
- The MoE together with Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education and in liaison with the Zonal Education Office network shall take steps to conduct annual infrastructure and physical resources audits to check the compliance by the of schools with the prescribed norms and standards, and also to identify the infrastructure and physical resources gaps and deficiencies.

Core Area – GE 10: Physical Resources – Digital Infrastructure, Connectivity, Content, and Capacity

Directive Principles

- DP 1: All education institutions, irrespective of geographical location and student number must be provided with access to modern ICT facilities with adequate connectivity and data packages, manned by competent personnel.
- DP 2: Central and Provincial authorities must be equipped to handle all levels of ICT matters and foster the use of ICT for all levels of the General Education System.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-GE 10.1: All schools irrespective of geographical location and student number must be provided with ICT - facilities with adequate connectivity and data packages, manned by competent personnel to facilitate the blended teaching-learning approach

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The MoE together with Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education shall develop and implement a National Level ICT Strategy and Action Plan for the general education system for building and maintenance of ICT infrastructure – installing hardware and software systems, providing new devices and components

and replacements as well as maintenance. The Sri Lanka Education Learning Network (LEARN) operated by the UGC and Universities may provide a suitable model for setting up central and provincial and zonal networks.

- The MoE and Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education shall take steps to provide ICT infrastructure to all types of schools with adequate connectivity and data packages to promote the application of the technology-enhanced, blended teaching-learning approach for all levels of education from Grade 1 to Grade 13.
- The MoE and Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education together with the NIE shall take steps to build the capacity of all types of teaching staff (*i.e., teachers, ISAs, teacher educators, etc.*) and managerial and administrative staff (*i.e., principals and SLEAS officers*) through in-service and continuing professional development programmes on the adoption of technology-enhanced applications in general education.

Policy-GE 10.2:

The Ministry of Education and Provincial level authorities must be equipped to handle all ICT related matters and foster the use of ICT for all levels of the General Education System

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The MoE in liaison with the NIE shall design and adopt a policy and strategic development framework to promote the technology-enhanced teaching-learning approach in the General Education System.
- The MoE in liaison with the NIE shall establish National E-learning Content Development Centre under the preview of the Curriculum Development Centre of the NIE with appropriate linkages with Universities and NCoEs.
- The MoE together with Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education shall take steps in liaison with internet connectivity providers to provide high-speed connectivity to all schools, ZICTECs, PICTECs, Training Schools, Teacher Training Colleges and NCoEs, and all other training centres functioning under their preview. The mechanism adopted by LEARN could be considered with required modifications for this purpose.
- Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education shall take steps to establish PICTECs in Provincial Education Departments and ZICTECs in those Zonal Education Offices that lack such facilities.
- The MoE and Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education shall allocate a required number of Information Technology Programme Officers/Development Officers from the newly recruited graduates through Graduate Employment Scheme to IT centres of Schools and ZICTECs and PICTECs and provide them specialized in-service training on ICT infrastructure and service maintenance.
- The MoE and the Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education shall take steps to establish hardware and network solution teams at the ZICTECs with the required mobility and financial model to provide services to all national schools and all provincial schools coming under the purview of the respective Zonal Education Offices.

Core Area – GE 11: Quality of Human Resources

Directive Principles

- DP 1: The State assumes the responsibility of setting the National Policy and Framework on Teacher Education and Development.
- DP 2: The State assumes the responsibility for establishing and safeguarding standards of the teaching profession.
- DP 3: Teacher recruitment must be based on the human resource needs at the school level and according to the qualifications and specializations achieved by the prospective applicants.
- DP 4: Teacher deployment across the national and provincial schools must be done according to the needs of the schools and the national curriculum.
- DP 5: The State assumes the responsibility of ensuring the quality and standards of pre-service teacher training.
- DP 6: The State assumes the responsibility of providing in-service teacher training programmes to promote continuing professional development and professionalization of teachers.
- DP 7: The State assumes the responsibility of providing in-service training, preferably at the postgraduate level to key categories of human resources – SLEAS officers, Principals, ISAs, Teacher Educators, and Teachers for improving the quality and standards of respective services.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-GE 11.1:

Quality and standards of teaching profession must be upgraded by enacting required national policies and establishing institutional mechanisms

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The NEC as mandated by NEC Act No. 19 of 1991 shall take steps to formulate a national policy on teacher education in consultation with relevant institutions and organizations and take steps to implement the policies and strategies through appropriate authorities.
- The MoE shall take steps to establish a regulatory body for the teaching profession, designated as the Sri Lanka Teacher Council (SLTC) through a new Act or as a part of the proposed Education Act.
 - The mandate of the SLTC should be to maintain the quality and standards of teaching professions and uphold and safeguard the rights of teachers and allied categories. This shall be achieved by prescribing Teacher Standards and Codes of Practice and by undertaking teacher registration, and also through maintaining the standards of teacher education programmes conducted by the teacher education Institutions.
 - The proposed SLTC shall consist of; (i) A chairperson who is an eminent educationist, (ii) Representatives of Sri Lanka Teachers' Service (SLTS), Sri Lanka Principals' Service (SLPS), Sri Lanka Teacher Educators' Service (SLTES), Sri Lanka Teacher Advisors' Service (SLTAS) and Sri Lanka Education Administrative Service (SLEAS), (iii) Representatives of the Faculties and Departments of Education in the Universities,

- (iv) Representatives of education professionals in public and private educational institutes, and (v) Representatives of retired distinguished educationists.
- The MoE shall take steps to amend the Sri Lanka Teacher Service Minute to make registration with the SLTC mandatory. And the SLTC shall offer different levels of registration according to the levels of qualification:
 - Full registration and full membership – for NCoE Diploma/Degree holders and graduates with PGDE Diploma; and
 - Provisional registration and associate membership – for those who lack the necessary educational and professional qualifications.
- The SLTC shall establish a mechanism in liaison with the relevant ministries, departments, and institutions to ensure that all those who aspire to become teachers are provided with pre-service teacher education programmes, leading to the award of National Diploma in Education or Bachelor’s Degree in Education, depending on the study programme followed.
- The SLTC through appropriate quality assurance and accreditation mechanism must ensure all institutions engaged in teacher education (*pre-service and in-service*) work on a common qualification framework necessary for entry into the teaching profession while matching the supply and demand for different categories of professionally qualified teachers graduating from all teacher education institutions.
- The MoE and Provincial Ministries of Education shall provide provisions for the following categories to earn the required educational and professional qualifications and upgrade their provisional registration and membership status from the SLTC:
 - All graduate teachers without any professional qualifications
 - Non-graduate teachers without required educational and professional qualifications.

Policy-GE 11.2:

Teacher education programmes should be formalized and linked to different categories of SLTC registration

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The MoE and the SLTC in liaison with respective teacher training institutions (*Universities, NIE, and NCoEs*) shall rationalize and consolidate teacher education programmes provided by them in the following manner:
 - University Departments and Faculties of Education and the NIE should continue to offer Degree (B.Ed.) and Postgraduate Diploma in Education programmes to meet current and emerging needs and for pre-service/initial and in-service teacher education programmes.
 - NCoEs in liaison with NIE shall work towards upgrading their diploma level programmes to degree level programmes leading to the B.Ed. Degree qualification as per the provisions of the Colleges of Education Act No: 30 of 1986.
 - MoE together with the teacher training institutions shall decide the entry qualifications and other personal attributes needed to enroll in pre-service/initial teacher education programmes.
 - SLTC shall prescribe standards and common qualification framework (*preferably the Sri Lanka Qualification Framework -SLQF*) to teacher training institutions on qualification levels and qualification

descriptors, level descriptors/programme learning outcomes, curriculum layouts, course learning outcomes and contents, teaching-learning process and assessment for pre-service/initial teacher training programmes.

- SLTC shall regularly conduct quality audits to monitor the quality and effectiveness of the curricula of teacher education and development programmes for ensuring the teacher education is relevant to the current and future human resource needs of the general education system and the country.
- MoE shall take steps to ensure that all teacher education institutions coming under its purview will have an appropriately governed and managed academic environment – academic staff with postgraduate qualifications and experience, physical resources, teaching/learning resources including, internet connectivity and ICT-based tools and aids, common amenities, etc.
- All national-level teacher training institutions shall prepare and implement a staff development plan including human resource succession plans that will ensure the availability of the required number of qualified staff for all disciplines.
- MoE shall take steps in liaison with a donor-assisted project to provide a scheme of fellowships, scholarships, and overseas attachments for teacher educators.

Policy-GE 11.3:

Continuing professional development programmes should be provided to all teachers in service to update their professional competencies and fulfil their professional aspirations

Recommended Strategic Activities

- Universities, NIE, Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs), and Teacher Centres (TCs) shall take the responsibility for providing continuing professional development (CPD) programmes for teachers and allied categories of staff. All these institutions must ensure that the curricula of such programmes should focus more on advanced training to cater to the emerging needs of teachers in service who have received pre-service/initial teacher education training.
- The MoE and Provincial Authorities shall ensure in-service, continuing professional development are compulsory for all teachers, and satisfactory completion of a minimum number of CPD programmes are compulsory for their annual increments.
- The MoE and Provincial Authorities shall take steps to further strengthen the school-based teacher professional development system managed and administered by the Zonal and Divisional Education Authorities together with the principals of respective schools.
- The MoE and Provincial Authorities shall make sure the schools provide continuing peer feedback among teachers and suitably gathered student feedback to teachers, on their effectiveness and correctable defects, and monitor their improvement.
- Universities, NIE, and other Teacher Training Institutions shall provide opportunities for teachers and other categories of human resources who are interested in broadening their knowledge to follow higher education programmes leading to diplomas and higher degrees.

Core Area – GE 12: Regulation, and Governance and Management

Directive Principles

- DP 1: The State assumes the responsibility for setting the policy and regulatory framework for all State and non-State education institutions from early childhood education through primary to tertiary level education.
- DP 2: Accountability and efficiency of governance and management of all educational institutions at all levels must be promoted by institutionalizing proper organizational structure with clear demarcation and definition of their powers and functions, and promoting greater inter-agency and inter-institutional coordination and cooperation.
- DP 3: Quality and standards of education must be improved by enhancing the capacity of all categories of staff and monitoring their performance through appropriate internal and external auditing/monitoring mechanisms.
- DP 4: Management of schools must be at an optimal level and this has to be realized through a tri-patriate alliance among principals and teachers, students, and parents/communities.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-GE 12.1:

Review, define and elaborate the regulatory framework that defines the roles and functions of the central and provincial authorities, agencies, and institutions, the governance and management structures, and the rules and regulations pertaining to general education

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The MoE shall take steps to enact a new Education Act incorporating relevant aspects of existing Ordinances, Acts, Laws, and Regulations relating to general education and introducing new features where necessary. The draft document prepared by a National Committee appointed by the Ministry of Education in 2009, the “New Education Act for General Education in Sri Lanka” could provide the basis for formulating the new Act.
- The NEC shall take steps to amend National Education Commission Act No. 19 of 1991 to define its mandate explicitly so as to empower the Commission to undertake mandatory functions – apex policy formulation, setting standards, and monitoring and certification functions.
- The NIE shall take steps to amend the National Institute of Education Act No. 28 of 1985 to strengthen its role in curriculum development, teacher education, and education research.
- The MoE shall take steps to restructure and redefine the powers and functions of the Ministry and the departments coming under its purview in the following manner;
 - Re-establish the Department of Education and bring all the divisions presently coming under the purview of the Ministry under the administrative control of this department,
 - Department of Education must be headed by a Director General drawn from the SLEAS cadre,
 - MoE shall redefine the powers and functions of the Ministry, Department of Education, Department of

Examinations, Educational Publications Department, and National Institute of Education according to the proposed structure,

- MoE shall ensure the Heads of the Department of Education, Department of Examinations, and Educational Publications Department are appointed from the SLEAS, and not from SLAS, and
- MoE shall set up a Performance Review and Coordinating Committee (PRCC), chaired by the Secretary of the Ministry with membership consisting of DG/Education, DG/Examinations, DG/Educational Publications, and DG/NIE to improve inter-agency communication and coordination, and address system-wide issues.

Policy-GE 12.2:

Improve the competency profiles and professionalism, and remunerations of all categories of staff

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The MoE shall take steps to establish an independent Sri Lanka Teacher Council (SLTC) for issuing a license for practicing for the education personnel (*i.e., Teachers, Principals, Inservice Advisors, Teacher Educators, and Education Administrators*), and also for promoting and maintaining professionalism among the education personnel/professional (*This is also dealt under the Policy-GE 11.1*).
- The MoE shall take steps to improve the teacher remuneration system by converting all four staff cadre services of the general education system (*i.e. SLEAS, SLPS, SLTES, and SLTS*) into one closed/combined service and adjusting their salary scales appropriately to reflect the services rendered.
- The MoE shall take steps to create greater synergy between the NIE and the NCoEs through appropriate enactments/amendments to existing Acts – National Institute of Education Act No. 28 of 1985 and Colleges of Education Act No. 30 1986 or bringing both the NIE and NCoEs under one university coming under the purview of the Ministry in-charge of the subject of General Education by enacting a new act.

Policy - GE 12.3:

Review, rationalize and restructure the provincial education system with the concurrent improvement of governance, management, and resource base

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The MoE and Provincial Ministries of Education together with the Ministry of Public Administration shall take steps to review the geographical area of jurisdiction of the provincial educational office network (zonal and divisional education offices) and demarcate it in line with the country's general administrative system; i.e Educational Offices in parallel with administrative districts and divisions.
- The MoE and Provincial Ministries of Education together with the Ministry of Public Administration shall take steps to review and redefine the powers and functions of District and Divisional Education Offices and provide them with adequate human, physical and financial resources to undertake the assigned functions.
- The State shall take steps to appoint Directors of Provincial Departments of Education in concurrence with the Ministry of Education with a clear line of command and the respective responsibilities in order to strengthen the line of command and communication between the Central Ministry and Provincial

Authorities in executing national policy, strategies, and programmes of general education.

- The MoE and the Provincial Ministries of Education shall ensure the Provincial Directors of Education report to both the Ministry of Education and respective Provincial Ministries of Education.

Policy-GE 12.4:

Review, rationalize and restructure the school system with the concurrent improvement of governance and management while empowering them to develop as distinct entities

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The State shall take steps to categorize all schools into 3 types – Primary (1-5 Grades), Secondary (1-11 or 6-11 Grades), and Senior Secondary (1-13 or 6 to 13 Grades), where the first two categories function as feeder schools for the Senior Secondary Schools located at least one per Education Division offering all streams of G.C.E. (A/L) education (*i.e. science and mathematics, arts, commerce, and technology*) and the senior secondary /collegiate level vocational education stream (*This aspect is also dealt under policy-GE 1.3 and policy-GE 8.1*).
- The MoE shall take steps to introduce a School-based Management System (SBM) in stepwise manner to the school system and train all principals and teachers on the application of SBM.
- The MoE and Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education shall take steps to establish School Management and Development Boards (SMDBs) according to the Constitutional Provisions, thereby ensuring assistance and guidance to the school principals in improving quality, standards, and also promoting transparency and accountability in school management.
- The MoE and Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education through the Zonal Education Offices shall take steps to strengthen the School Development Committees (SDCs) of the Schools Development Societies (SDSs) with special provisions to assist small schools with less resource capacity to promote a tripartite alliance between school teachers and administrators, parents and students, and community in the management and progressive development of such schools.

PART IV - VOLUME III

**POLICY PROPOSALS AND
RECOMMENDED STRATEGIC
ACTIVITIES ON HIGHER EDUCATION**



1. STATUS REVIEW

1.1. Introduction

The higher education sector in Sri Lanka has been faced with two formidable challenges; catering for an ever-increasing demand for access, while reforming the higher education system with the concurrent improvement of quality and relevance of education, and research and innovations. Addressing these two challenges require reforms in its structure, financing, regulation, governance and management, procedures and processes, and outputs and outcomes.

The topography of the existing higher education (HE) sector has been broadly categorized as a conventional binary system consisting of; i) State-run universities, and ii) relatively underdeveloped and underutilized alternative State higher education institutions (HEIs), with a slowly emerging sub-sector, non-State higher education. The binary system must be transformed into a more globally proven tri-partite system consisting of three key types of HEIs, namely; i) 'world class' postgraduate and research universities, ii) State universities and State and non-State HEIs primarily catering for undergraduate training, and iii) technical and professional State and non-State institutions. This transformation along with concurrent improvements in financing, regulations, governance and management, and processes would help to increase access to tertiary education, provide more flexibility and mobility within and among the sectors, offer well-delineated diverse education, training, and career paths, and enhance standards, quality and relevance of the training offered.

The current status and lingering issues that hinder the above-stated transformation of the higher education sector are discussed under 5 sub-headings: (i) Participation, Access, and Types of Educational Offerings; ii) Higher Education Financing and Private Sector Participation; iii) Performance of Higher Education Sector: Inputs, Processes, Outputs, and Outcomes; iv) Learning Environment, Student Support Services, and Student Conduct and Discipline; and v) Regulation, Governance, and Accountability.

1.2. Participation, Access, and Types of Educational Offerings

1.2.1. Participation and access

Despite the fact that the demand for higher education is increasing, access to higher education remains constrained due to various factors. Participation in tertiary education as measured by GER (*for the 19-23-year age cohort*) as assessed using 2012/2013 data, was 18.8%. Based on age-cohort participation data, Sri Lanka was placed at 86th out of 127 countries in 2012 and 71st of 97 in 2013. One of the major reasons for low participation in higher education is the inability of the State, which is the primary provider of higher education, to provide opportunities for higher education for those who leave general education. Though the State-run universities, in spite of limited financial resources, staff and physical facilities, continue to increase the intake on average by 5% per annum, the increase does not match the increasing demand. Another reason for low participation in higher education is the low enrolment into non-State higher education institutions (NSHEIs), despite having a sizable presence of NSHEIs. The low enrolment in NSHEIs appears to be due to multiple factors; the inability of most students to meet the financial cost, low acceptance by the public due to uncertainty of the quality of training, and low recognition given for qualifications obtained from NSHEIs by the public sector employers.

1.2.2. Student admission to State universities

Currently, both the district quota system (DQS) and the Z-score method of standardization are being used in university admission. However, the use of DQS in addition to merit has drawn some criticism from the public since it discriminates against students with high merit as they happen to be from urban and peri-urban areas. Amidst all these criticisms, the district quota system has continued for well over 4 decades and it is indeed in need of a critical review in the light of the development across the provinces and districts that have taken place over the past 4 decades. In addition, the Z-score system that is adopted for the standardization of G.C.E. (A/L) marks has also drawn much criticism.

Moreover, many factors delay the commencement of academic programmes for new entrants and also disrupt the synchrony of academic calendars among faculties within universities and also among universities. The factors are: delays in marking of answer scripts; delays occurring due to re-corrections; delays in enrolment of students to some study programmes even after the commencement of the enrolment process; and the problems related to the admission of two populations of students sitting G.C.E. (A/L) at a given year under two syllabi.

1.2.3. Types of educational offerings

Historically, universities in Sri Lanka admit more students into Arts, Management and Commerce study programmes than for science-based and professional study programmes. University Grants Commission data (2019) suggests that enrolment into arts, management and commerce study programmes which have relatively low employability, accounted for 48.2% of the intake, while the rest of the disciplines, mostly science-based study programmes which have high to medium employability, accounted only for 51.8% of the total undergraduate enrolment. This pattern is not different in NSHEIs either, as the fields such as management, business studies, and ICT are the most offered and affordable, and therefore they are the most widely enrolled study programmes. With this pattern of enrolments, Sri Lanka occupies a special and unenviable position globally; it is ranked 1st of 106 countries for the proportion of its students in humanities and social sciences but is placed in the 79th position out of 99 countries for the proportion of students in science and engineering. For engineering alone, it fares even worse, and it is ranked at 92nd out of 103 countries.

1.2.4. Academic year of Sri Lankan universities

In Sri Lanka, one academic year with two semesters, each with 15 weeks duration and 4-6 weeks of inter-semester break runs throughout the 12 months (*and sometimes even longer*). In most countries, the break between two semesters is very short (*1-2 weeks*). This enables universities to have a short-term or semester, in addition to two main semesters within one academic year of 12 months. Therefore, it is seemingly rational and logical to introduce an efficient annual academic calendar (*two 15-week semesters and one short semester of 10-12 weeks duration*) into our universities that would be comparable with other countries. This approach would bring several benefits to all stakeholders: students can work in industrial attachments to acquire work experience, and engage in community or volunteer services and in other organized activities which would facilitate the development of soft skills; academic staff get quality time to focus on research; for universities, this will allow a window of 10-12 weeks to focus on short courses on fee-levying basis for the general public including for its undergraduates. Also, if the national examinations {G.C.E. (O/L) and G.C.E. (A/L)} coincide during this period (*like in other countries*), then the academics could benefit from uninterrupted involvement in the paper-marking process during the short semester, thus improving the quality of G.C.E. (O/L) and G.C.E. (A/L) examination process and reducing the time gap between examination (*including paper marking*) and releasing of results.

1.3. Higher Education Financing and Private Sector Participation

1.3.1. Public investment

At an aggregate level, weighted against either the GDP or total public spending, Sri Lanka devotes a relatively small share of its wealth to higher education. Sri Lanka spends only less than 0.32% of GDP on tertiary education or only 1.62% in terms of total government expenditures. Further, whether in aggregate or per-student terms, Sri Lanka's public funding for higher education is far less than that is invested by the middle-income countries with which Sri Lanka aspires to compete.

1.3.2. Cost recovery

In contrast to most of the middle-income countries, the universities and HEIs in Sri Lanka depend on government grants for almost all of their resources. Despite that, the cost recovery by the institutions from the users is rather limited. Internal students pay nothing to attend courses. Though the higher education sector is under constant pressure to expand and boost its quality and standards, under-funding coupled with the low-cost recovery has made these efforts unrealistic and unattainable. To achieve this goal, as shown in other countries, private financing has become a necessity. Conceivably, at least a part of the cost has to be recovered from the users while the needy students are relieved through aid schemes to ensure equity. Another option is for the State universities to engage in income-generating activities to compensate for the low-cost recovery. Unfortunately, not many universities adopted this approach despite provisions being available to do so.

1.3.3. Private sector participation

Until a few years ago, private sector participation in higher education was rather restricted. Even at present, because of the ambiguity of regulations, many prospective investors are reluctant to move in. To aggravate matters, the public perception of NSHEIs is still not positive as the sector is yet to get legitimacy, mainly due to the lack of government regulation and oversight. In addition to offering study programmes, the private sector can also greatly contribute to enhancing the relevance of the higher education sector as a whole through many other channels such as public-private partnerships in research and development, resource sharing, exchange of staff across two sectors, placement for internships/industrial placement for undergraduates, etc. Unfortunately, these types of collaboration are still very rare.

1.4. Performance of Higher Education Sector: Inputs, Processes, Outputs, and Outcomes

1.4.1. Inputs

1.4.1.1. Students

Though the students coming into undergraduate training programmes in State universities go through a very competitive G.C.E. (A/L) examination, they appear to be poorly prepared for higher learning. The teacher-centered teaching and exam-oriented learning with very little adoption of learner-centered, teaching-learning approaches appear to have adversely affected the total development of the child. In this system, rote learning, that is learning by memorizing rather than understanding, is the norm and the most prevalent practice. Further, they have been groomed by the "tuition culture" prevailing in the country. Such students, when they enter university education, perform very poorly; most of them are not enthusiastic about learning, their learning habits are poorly attuned to higher learning, their language competencies, particularly English knowledge is so low, and the ICT competencies are less than the level desired. Moreover, their socioemotional skills are poorly developed. The postgraduate students who enrol at higher degrees also show similar shortcomings. They seek postgraduate education as a fallback option when they cannot find gainful employment. As such, their intrinsic motivation for a higher level of training is rather

low.

1.4.1.2. Human resources

As of UGC data, the overall average student:teacher ratio (STR) across all universities is 17.5:1 and is higher than the expected average of approved norms. This is certainly not compatible with the requirements to adopt a more student-centered, teaching-learning approach. The STR is more worrying when the entire tertiary education sector, which includes other post-secondary education institutions, such as Advanced Technical Institutes (ATIs) and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions, are considered in addition to the State universities. As of the available statistics, it appears that Sri Lanka belongs to a small group of countries with both extremely high STRs and very low GERs in tertiary education. This serious deficit in the number of teaching staff members available is more perturbing given the need to increase enrolment. If the situation is to improve, the rate of increase of teaching staff will have to occur at a faster rate than the rate of student enrolment.

1.4.1.3. Human resource competencies

The quality of academic staff appears to have deteriorated over time due to the archaic practice of recruiting academic cadres at the probationary lecturer level, where the assessment of candidates is purely based on first-degree qualifications and performance. This is certainly an unhealthy practice, which favours inbreeding and nepotism that has not helped the universities to attract and sustain a cadre with high achievements in postgraduate training. Further, many teachers, mostly in arts, humanities, and management faculties tend to stagnate at the level of masters' qualifications with no strong commitment or opportunities to seek doctoral qualifications. These practices have led to severe erosion of quality, standards, and professionalism among the academic staff in State universities. Moreover, these academic staff have not been given adequate in-service training in education technologies such as curricular design and development, and teaching-learning and assessment methods, particularly the application of ICT-based teaching-learning tools and techniques. In the absence of such training, many of them continue to remain as poor teachers and role models for students. With this attitude, most academics continue to consider that university education is meant primarily for providing undergraduate education. This erosion too has been noted among non-academic administrative and technical staff categories. Compulsory post-recruitment training at the postgraduate level has not been the norm for this category of employees, except a few seeking such training on their own for promotional prospects.

1.4.1.4. Competencies of university staff in ICT-based applications

A survey conducted by Lanka Education and Research Network (LEARN) revealed that the competencies of academic, academic support and non-academic staff vary considerably among universities and faculties. In general, the level of competencies of academic staff in non-science faculties is extremely poor. The level of adoption of ICT tools in university administration, particularly, the level of adoption of electronic management information systems, electronic modes and applications to connect with staff and students, paperless document management using e-signatures with digital certification, etc., is extremely low. Further, the maintenance of ICT infrastructure, particularly, the Learning Management System (LMS) and the technical backup services available for troubleshooting, have been very weak. This is primarily due to inadequacies of the cadre and the lack of updating the competencies of existing staff.

1.4.1.5. Physical and technical resources

Despite a considerable expansion of facilities over the past two decades, in terms of lecture halls, auditoriums, laboratories, student hostels, accommodation, etc., still, there are many universities, particularly located in provinces that face a shortage of many essential facilities, particularly staff and student accommodation, and welfare, sports and recreational facilities. Even many of the existing lecture halls lack modern teaching equipment, and most

laboratories are short of up-to-date laboratory equipment and material. In many universities, internet connections and free wireless connections are limited. Most of the dormitories, cafeterias, libraries, and meeting areas are short of space and upkeep, and hence do not appear to provide a conducive academic environment.

1.4.1.6. ICT Infrastructure and usage

A survey conducted by LEARN revealed that the availability of required ICT infrastructure, technologies and technical know-how for online delivery and conducting examinations varied substantially across the universities and HEIs. Though almost all universities have LMS facilities installed, the ICT facilities available within the institutes are grossly inadequate to meet the needs of the current student population. Further, institutional policies, regulations and guidelines, and sufficient technical expertise are not in place in many universities to regulate, guide, and train teachers to use LMS effectively when delivering courses and conducting examinations. Availability and use of plagiarism detection software are also not widespread. As most of the academic and academic support staff lack adequate knowledge and experience in the use of ICT applications in teaching-learning and assessments, even the existing limited ICT facilities have not been used in full capacity.

1.4.2. Processes

1.4.2.1. Curriculum design and evaluation

The conventional curricula of most study programmes have evolved through an empirical approach where a periodical expansion of contents has been done to match the expansion of knowledge in respective disciplines. However, the inputs into curricula are largely determined by the teachers as they see fit rather than on the expected outcomes of the study programmes, determined based on employment market needs. The latter approach is the thinking behind outcome-based education and student-centered learning (OBE-SCL), which is aimed at aligning education with the demands of the workplace, and at the same time developing a whole array of cognitive and non-cognitive skills. Further, in designing programme and course curricula maps, national guidelines such as Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework (SLQF), Subject Benchmark Statements (SBSs), OBE-SCL pedagogical techniques, and learning taxonomies for facilitating the hierarchical development of cognitive skills are not fully complied uniformly by universities and faculties. Though this approach has been prescribed by the UGC and Quality Assurance Council (QAC) since early 2000, as the recommended methods of curricula design and delivery, it appears that many study programmes, particularly arts, humanities, management, science, etc., are yet to adopt it fully.

1.4.2.2. Curriculum flexibility

Traditionally, almost all curricula in universities, both in professional and non-professional fields of study, are very rigid and loaded with face-to-face teaching-learning exercises that run from 8.00 am to 4.00 pm, Monday through Friday, on a 15-week semester basis. Moreover, the curricula layouts have been designed without giving any consideration to allow inter-faculty collaboration in academic offerings. In this system, very few options are given for inter-faculty teaching, and hence hardly any opportunity is given for students while reading for the major to choose courses from a wide spectrum of minor or optional/complementary subjects, based on their preferences.

1.4.2.3. Curriculum content

Unfortunately, in Sri Lanka, as is the case with many other developing countries, though the enrolment is rather limited, the unemployment among graduates has historically been high. This is more visibly seen among graduates of arts, humanities, and management and to some extent in science graduates. It is also widely acknowledged that the graduates face this problem not because of their making but because of the mismatch of what they have been taught and acquired during undergraduate studies with what the prospective employers expect. As stated elsewhere, the curricula of most of the study programmes, particularly in arts, humanities, and science streams,

overemphasize the knowledge component with less emphasis on employability skills. The students are offered rigid curricula overloaded with advanced knowledge of conventional subjects without emphasizing their practical applications in the real world. Further, student training is being compartmentalized within their respective faculties/departments, and no flexibility is offered to move across boundaries, allowing the students to choose from courses/modules from other departments/faculties to complement their undergraduate studies.

1.4.2.4. Employability and entrepreneurial skills

Numerous studies and empirical evidence suggest graduates coming out from State universities are deficient in socioemotional skills or soft skills such as communication skills, positive outlook and initiative and entrepreneurship, interpersonal skills, problem-solving skills, ability to work independently, willingness to learn, ability to work under pressure, etc. This situation is still worse with external degree programmes offered by conventional universities, where the majority of study programmes are in arts, humanities, and management. Unfortunately, many study programmes continuously show resistance to incorporate employability and entrepreneurial skill components into their programme and course curricula, despite the promotion through government-arranged three World Bank-funded projects (*IRQUE, HETC, and AHEAD Projects*), which supported the modernization of undergraduate study programmes and course curricula to improve employability and entrepreneurial skills of graduates. Though there has been an upward trend in providing learning opportunities to acquire employability skills, the availability of built-in courses to promote such skills, eg. English, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), personality development, entrepreneurial skills, etc., is still limited.

1.4.2.5. Teaching-learning

Most study programmes and many academics still are heavily relying on the conventional pedagogical approach: a top-down approach where the teacher controls teaching-learning with conventional, face-to-face, classroom instructions, coupled with practical classes and occasional tutorials. This teacher-centric approach is the most prevalent practice in most universities and faculties despite being advocated to treat undergraduates as adult learners who like to be independent in learning and apply their experience to learning. Despite the availability, at least to a limited extent, the application of ICT-based tools and techniques in teaching-learning has also been limited. Nonetheless, a survey by LEARN has reported many of the shortcomings that hinder the widespread application of modern education technologies: online platforms incur some additional cost for students; many teachers have found that synchronized online teaching, as an alternative approach to face-to-face is difficult to implement due to multitude of problems such as frequent disruption of internet connection and congestions in the network; limitations of institutional ICT infrastructure and bandwidth; lack of technical support, etc.

1.4.2.6. Assessments

The assessment system in universities is one of the least modernized areas in higher education in Sri Lanka. Though there has been some improvement of assessments with the introduction of credit-based, course unit, and GPA grading system and semester-based academic programmes where both formative and summative assessments have been built into each course unit, many programmes are yet to internalize best practices to ensure the alignment of assessments tasks of formative and summative assessments with the course and programme intended learning outcomes (ILOs). Measures for ensuring validity and reliability of assessments such as assessment blueprinting, assessment rubrics, and post-exam item analysis are almost non-existent within the Sri Lankan higher education system. Further, in framing assessment questions and tasks, Bloom's Taxonomy is rarely employed. Moreover, very few courses/programmes employ performance-based or authentic assessments in which the students are tested on their ability to perform real-world tasks and apply higher-order thinking and skills to create products or complete tasks/processes.

1.4.2.7. Use of ICT platforms for assessments

As stated elsewhere, despite promoting the use of the LMS platform for teaching-learning and assessments, the application of online assessments by the academic community has been extremely low. Though it has been adopted by some faculties/departments/academic staff for continuous assessments where LMS is well established, many appear to be having less faith in the online administration of examinations. Also, few attempts have been made to conduct summative or end-semester examinations online due to several constraints, including its validity and acceptance according to the university examination by-laws.

1.4.2.8. External degree programmes

The External Degree Programmes (EDPs) are one of the major challenges for the universities and the government. It is widely recognized, though this avenue is essential to provide access to those who could not enter the internal compartment of universities, the quality and relevance of EDPs have continued to remain substandard. As an attempt to reform the EDPs, the UGC in 2010 issued a very comprehensive administrative circular (UGC circular No. 932 of 2010) through which wide-ranging reforms were initiated, such as (a) limiting the number of enrolments to twice the number of internal enrolments, (b) reorganizing the structure and functions of EDP units/divisions as Centres for Open and Distance Learning, (c) introducing a Quality Assurance (QA) system for EDPs, and (d) promoting greater collaboration between degree-awarding universities and external training institutions (ETIs) which provide training for EDP students. Further, WB/HETC Project in liaison with the UGC has developed two QA manuals – one for Quality Assurance of External Degree Programmes and Extension Courses offered by State Universities and the Manual of Best Practices and Standards and Guidelines for ETIs. However, the envisaged reforms have not been fully implemented; for example, the limit imposed on the intake was relaxed subsequently, the formal partnership between the degree-awarding university and ETIs has not been sought, and the QA system has never been implemented by the UGC. As such, the lingering issues mentioned earlier are still prevalent in EDPs.

1.4.2.9. Postgraduate education, research, and innovations

As of 2020, all 15 State universities and 23 degree-awarding non-State higher education institutions (NSHEIs) offer postgraduate (PG) training, and the total output of postgraduate degrees in 2019 was estimated as 9,991. However, most of these PG programmes, culminating in PG diplomas or master's level qualifications are offered through taught courses, on part-time basis, and mostly offered during weekends. Very few research degrees (*only 359 in 2019*) leading to MSc, MPhil, and PhD are offered at present. Further, postgraduate training through coursework has become the most preferred and widespread mode with the establishment of Postgraduate Faculties and Postgraduate Institutes since the late 1970s. Most of the students entering these programmes are from the student pool who could not secure gainful employment and therefore resorted to PG training as a fallback option. This system with weekend classes is also the most convenient operational mode for those who are already employed as they usually do not get study leave for such engagements. The other reason is that university academics in State universities are not formally authorized to engage in postgraduate teaching during weekdays, as their primary mandate is to attend undergraduate training during weekdays. Nonetheless, the taught PG programmes are faced with many deficiencies; most notably, it lacks the rigour of postgraduate training, and most programmes are oriented towards imparting knowledge with little or no attention to building scholarship, proficiency in academic and professional writing, and other professional skills. Because of the popularity of taught PG programmes, research-based PG programmes have become less prevalent over the years. Thus, unlike in many countries where universities have become centres of excellence in research and scholarship, Sri Lankan universities with part-time postgraduate education continue to forsake their role in producing high-quality science and technology personnel and scholars, and in the generation of new knowledge and innovations. Many factors appear to have contributed to this situation; the relative paucity of research fundings, the dearth of well-qualified research savvy academics, scarcity of modern laboratory facilities and equipment, absence of significant national and international collaboration, bureaucratic red tapes, rigid financial

regulations and auditing procedures, scarcity of access to research journals and research forums, low weightage given to research and innovation in career promotion, etc. These factors could be considered both as causes and consequences of the prevalence of weak research and scholarship culture in Sri Lankan universities.

1.4.2.10. Staff development

Recruitment to academic staff is mostly made on the basis of academic credentials of prospective applicants, and their post-recruitment training too is focused on specialization on the assigned subjects/disciplines. Yet these academics' core function is teaching for which they have hardly received any formal training. Though the newly recruited academics are given in-service training, particularly through the induction programmes offered by Staff Development Centres (SDCs), these programmes too have been designed to introduce academics into the university system, its rules and regulations, norms, and practices with some focus on lesson planning, teaching, and assessment. In addition, these centres also offer short training programmes on topics of importance to academics but mainly in an ad-hoc and sporadic manner. Therefore, the extent of training on pedagogy and assessments provided at present is hardly sufficient to train academics to become proficient in application of modern educational technologies. Compared to this insufficient in-service training provided for academics, non-academic staff hardly receive any formal induction programmes or continuing professional development (CPD) programmes.

1.4.2.11. Quality assurance in the State universities

It is widely perceived globally that quality assurance/management has a positive impact, particularly on higher education institutions in their attempts to become more efficient, effective, and client-oriented. In Sri Lanka, the Quality Assurance (QA) system in higher education was first introduced in early 2000. The external quality assurance system has progressed steadily but implementing internal quality assurance system is yet to take off in many universities and HEIs, despite the UGC issuing circular instructions with respect to establishing and operating an institutional framework for implementation of internal quality procedures. Besides that, at present, the UGC/QA mechanism is concentrating exclusively on State universities and HEIs as it has no mandate to extend its activities to degree-awarding SHEIs and NSHEIs. Nonetheless, there is a growing need to expand quality assurance and accreditation services to all Sri Lankan HEIs, including private ones, as has been done in most countries.

1.4.2.12. Quality of education in NSHEIs

The proliferation of NSHEIs has also been a key feature in the Sri Lankan higher education landscape that has taken place over the past two decades. These are operated as fee-levying, for-profit business ventures, with the registration under the Registrar of Companies. According to the MoHE data, there are 23 such NSHEIs which has obtained MoHE/UGC approval, offering 184 study programmes. Though the ministry responsible for higher education is required to review these NSHEIs and the study programmes offered regularly, it is yet to establish an oversight mechanism to supervise the institutions and a quality assurance mechanism to assess the quality of their educational offerings. In addition to these, there exists a large number of NSHEIs, operating through cross-border arrangements, preparing students for degrees offered by overseas counterparts. As of current practice, they do not come under the purview of any local regulatory mechanism except their registration with the Board of Investment and Registrar of Companies. Almost all these MoHE approved NSHEIs do not have adequate in-house academic staff. Most of them draw lecturers from the State universities to work for them on visiting or part-time basis, mostly in the evenings and on the weekends or holidays. The majority of other staff belong to temporary, advisory, visiting, and part-time categories, with a very small number belonging to the permanent staff category. Since these institutions are profit-oriented business ventures, they seem to be reluctant to recruit academic, administrative, and technical staff on a permanent basis.

There is also a concern about the quality of education provided by the NSHEIs. The government in 2017 attempted to introduce new legislation under the Bill on Quality Assurance, Equalization, and Qualifications Framework with

the aim of improving the quality of educational offerings by the State universities and HEIs as well NSHEIs, but it was withdrawn subsequently owing to the protests from student groups and academics on various grounds. This ambivalent policy towards formalizing the quality assurance process for NSHEIs has led to uncertainty among the public about the quality and standards of educational programmes offered by these institutions.

There is also a lack of clarity about the processes and mechanisms for governance and management in NSHEIs. This is in contrast to what is operated in the State universities where there are strict rules and regulations, and guidelines with respect to governance and management, staff recruitment and promotion, admission process, academic development and planning (*such as SLQF framework, Subject Benchmark Statements, OBE-SL approach, etc.*), approval of study programmes, teaching-learning and assessment processes and procedures, award of degrees, etc.

1.4.3. Outputs and outcomes of Higher Education

1.4.3.1. Graduation rates and delays

Empirical evidence shows that, though most graduates successfully complete the programme and graduate at the first attempt, most undergraduate study programmes extend beyond their stipulated time period. The main reasons for these long delays are the delays occurring in transition from one level of education to the next and disruptions in academic programmes due to frequent university closures, mostly resulting from student agitations, and also due to internal inefficiencies related to conducting examinations, marking answer scripts, and processing results. These time wastages are costly for the institutions as well as for students.

1.4.3.2. Learning outcomes

As shown by limited studies and empirical evidence, though the graduates from the State universities are proficient in knowledge in core disciplines or cognitive skills, the majority of them appear to be deficient in non-cognitive or socioemotional skills. Deficiencies that are often flagged by the employers and authorities are, (a) language proficiency and ICT literacy, (b) desire and propensity to life-long learning, (c) interpersonal skills including the ability to work as a team, and (d) initiative and a positive mindset. Though these deficiencies occur partly due to the shortcomings in general education, equipping the graduates with the required cognitive and socioemotional skills is an undeniable responsibility of universities.

1.4.3.3. Labour market outcomes

Labour market outcomes as measured by employability studies and employers' feedback usually provide a proxy measure on how successful the university education is in meeting the labour market's needs. Sri Lanka, in global comparison, has the highest proportion of graduates in humanities and social sciences (*ranking 1st*) while having one of the lowest proportions of graduates in science, engineering, and allied fields (*ranking 92nd*). It has been factually shown, graduates from the crowded humanities and social sciences fields have difficulties in finding gainful employment, and when they do, often end up in sectors only peripherally related to their fields of study, whereas the science, engineering, and IT graduates, who are relatively few, have little difficulty in finding a job, and it usually corresponds to their discipline.

1.4.3.4. Research and innovations

Research is essentially limited to State universities as degree-awarding SHEIs and NSHEIs concentrate their resources on teaching with hardly any investment in research. Though at least in terms of human resources, at least in principle, there is a solid research base in most universities, the intensity, quality, and applicability of research in universities are uneven. The general impression is that except for some outstanding but isolated cases, not much research is being conducted in universities. Further, though the research output in terms of the number of publications in Sri

Lanka is relatively high in the South Asian context, the relevance of most of the research done continues to remain obscure; in most cases, research is exclusively academic, and its results are rarely publicized outside the Sri Lankan university arena. In terms of filing patents, even though the number of Sri Lanka's patent filing has increased six-fold since 2000, that is a slower pace than India (7 fold), Malaysia (10 fold), or Vietnam (15 fold).

1.4.3.5. Industry collaboration

Empirical evidence suggests that the link between industry and academia is almost at a very minimal level. Many reasons and explanations have often been presented in many forums. There is considerable debate on the causes and remedies; academics feel that the rigid university administrative and financial procedures, fear of audit queries, lack of time, etc., dampen their interest to embark on university-industry partnerships. On the other hand, employers perceive that academics lack entrepreneurial spirit.

1.4.3.6. International ranking

Sri Lankan universities do not show up yet in any of the three most popular international rankings, namely, Times Higher Education (THE), Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), and Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU). Reasons for the lower performances of Sri Lankan universities in international rankings are the low output in research and innovations, the fewer number of articles published in high-ranking international journals (such as *Nature and Science*, or at least journals indexed with *Science Citation Index-expanded*, *Social Science Citation Index*, and *Arts & Humanities Citation Index*), and low international visibility because of the relative absence of international collaborations, staff, and student exchanges. However, several Sri Lankan Universities are listed in Webometric Ranking System, a ranking system for the world universities based on a composite indicator that takes into account both the volume of the Web content and the visibility and impact of these web publications according to the number of external views they received. It covers more than 30,000 HEIs, and Sri Lanka has 10 universities in the "top" 5,000, and within the "top" 500 of the South Asian Region, again trailing behind comparators in South and South-East Asia. Outcomes of these rankings, nonetheless, reveal that Sri Lankan universities have to go a long way to reach the 'world-class' university or 'acclaimed' university status.

1.5. Learning Environment, Student Support Services, and Student Conduct and Discipline

1.5.1. Learning environment

Most universities in Sri Lanka have indeed offered minimal facilities (*teaching-learning resources and common amenities, accommodation facilities, cafeteria, study areas and recreational facilities, etc.*) and services (*welfare, and student counselling and mentoring services, career guidance and career counselling services, healthcare services and needy student support, etc.*). Nonetheless, all such services need further improvement in their efficacy and efficiency in service provisions. Unlike in many other countries, education in the State institutions cost students only minimally in terms of tuition fees. Most of the students receive financial assistance in the form of bursaries and "Mahapola" scholarships. They also have access to highly subsidized hostel facilities and food at university canteens, although their atmosphere, quality, and hygienic conditions have continuously remained very poor and substandard. However, this minimalist welfare framework has been in crisis too, since it has not been able to ensure an environment with adequate quality of student life within all universities. This has been mainly because the funding for facility maintenance and expansion has not been in parallel with the rapid and continuous increase in the number of student enrolments as well as the expansion of the academic and non-academic staff.

1.5.2. Counselling and mentoring

Student counselling is an institutional service, as a part of the learner support system in operation in universities, to help, guide, and assist the students, while student mentoring is a one-to-one long-term relationship, informally established between a teacher and student, based on mutual trust, respect, openness and willingness to share and learn. Though both services appear to be in operation in most universities, both services lack adequacy, quality, and continuity. In the absence of any directive from the regulatory agency, the UGC, there is so much variation in the organizational arrangements, resources, practices, and in most instances, in the efficacy and efficiency of such services. One obvious deficiency is that the academics in Sri Lanka have not been given much training on both these aspects except the introductory training session by the SDCs under the induction training programme offered to newly recruited academic staff.

1.5.3. Career guidance and career counselling

Career guidance and career counselling services are two elements that came into effect in Sri Lankan universities since the mid-1990s in response to growing unemployment among graduates and as a means of easing the mismatch of conventional university education and employment market. Though the importance of career guidance and career counselling services in university education was recognized as early as the late 1990s, the system is yet to get institutionalized and formalized across all universities, faculties, and study programmes. Despite the steps taken by the UGC to strengthen the career guidance and career counselling service in universities, except a very few universities and faculties, many are yet to institutionalize these two services. In general, except the professional study programmes such as medicine, engineering, dental science, veterinary science, agriculture, business management, etc., which have integrated industrial placement and/or internships within and after graduation as a part of the undergraduate curricula, many other faculties which accommodate the largest percentage of undergraduates such as Faculties of Science, Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences have given lesser importance to establish and operate effective career guidance and counselling services.

1.5.4. Student life and conduct, and discipline

The quality of student life in universities has deteriorated over the past few decades. While there has been a decline in the standards of physical facilities, the major cause of the erosion of overall conditions of learning environment, and quality of student life in Sri Lankan universities are the students' indiscipline. It is manifested in many forms; the most prominent of them are aloofness, distancing from teachers, non-compliance with university rules and regulations, student politics covertly linked to national politics, and inhumane 'ragging' of freshmen students that is done under the guise of 'freshmen orientation' for newcomers to campus sub-culture. This gradual erosion of student discipline and conduct has also dampened to some extent the enthusiasm of teaching staff in academic engagement as well. Despite continuous interventions by university authorities and the MoHE and UGC, the culture of violence seems to remain embedded into undergraduate life so strongly.

1.6. Regulations, Governance, and Accountability

1.6.1. State university system

1.6.1.1. National level

Higher education in Sri Lanka is a central government function. The central government is responsible for the national policy; financing for the State universities and HEIs; allocation of staff and students to universities; and quality assurance. The strongly centralized organization of the sector is ensured by the fact that, in addition to being monitored by the line ministry, it is *de facto* run by the UGC, whose chairman, vice-chairman, and five other members are appointed by the President under the Universities Act No. 16 of 1978 which was enacted 40 years ago

when there were fewer than 20,000 students enrolled. In general, the university administration at the national level is characterized both by strong institutional autonomy and tight central control, and this arrangement promotes neither accountability nor performance. Central control exists on finances, admissions, recruitment of academic and administrative staff (*through administrative circulars*), and to some extent academic and administrative matters. The coexistence of the Ministry and the UGC sometimes results in role confusion and a lack of clear lines of responsibility. Finally, the ill-defined way the private sector is treated from regulatory, financial, and QA perspectives has constrained its development, though its contribution to the expansion of higher education has been well recognized.

1.6.1.2. Systemwide level

Higher education in Sri Lanka is a mosaic of institutions that differ in status, mission, age, quality, size, and student body. The Ministry in-charge of Higher Education “manages” 17 universities, 20 institutes, and 18 Advanced Technical Institutions (*that come under the SLIATE*). Other ministries control a few other public degree-awarding institutions (*such as Kothalawala Defense University, Ocean University, University of Vocational Technology, National Institute of Education, etc.*). Sri Lanka’s HE system follows the traditional Commonwealth model; regulated by a buffer body placed between the Ministry in-charge of Higher Education and universities. In South Asia, for instance, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, India, and Bangladesh all have a Higher Education Commission or a UGC that functions as the apex regulatory body of universities and HEIs.

1.6.1.3. Institution level

Sri Lankan universities have adopted the classic British Commonwealth governance structure, consisting of a University Council, a Senate (*Academic Syndicate*), and Faculty Boards. The Vice-Chancellor (VC) who is accountable to the University Council is the chief executive officer responsible for overall administrative and academic management. The Registrar is responsible for general administration, under the direction of the VC. The Council, which is the governing authority of the university, varies in size depending on the number of faculties. The UGC appoints a majority of Council members and all categories of executive staff (*except the Registrar, Bursar, and a few other posts*). Besides that, the UGC exerts control over most of the establishments and developmental matters related to staff, academic and academic-related matters – such as the creation of new staff cadre, the establishment of new faculties/departments/centres/units, commencement of new study programmes, and even revisions of curricula of existing study programmes require the approval of the UGC. Administration and management of the university are primarily vested with Vice-Chancellor under the purview of the Council. Most universities adopt a very conventional *laissez-faire* approach and very few have resorted strategic management approach. Nonetheless, most universities, on annual basis prepare their business plans, but these often lack operational plans and are rarely costed and implemented as planned, and most instances not monitored. Though in theory, as noted, Sri Lankan State universities have a high degree of autonomy, the regulatory controls and various encroachments seriously limit this autonomy. On the other hand, many universities appear to be reluctant to make decisions, and unnecessarily refer many matters to the UGC for clarifications and rulings, thus making the granted autonomy redundant.

Although the above-mentioned limitations infringe on their managerial freedom, it is also true that some universities do not make full use of the autonomy granted to them, particularly in the financial area. It has been reported, for instance, that universities do not always exercise the right to earn funds through income-generating activities and use the generated funds for their development. Excessive bureaucracy including auditing issues sometimes reduces the appetite of universities to fully embrace autonomy. Therefore, it is very conceivable that substantial efforts are needed to ramp up university management capacity that is needed to allow autonomy to be utilized fully.

Besides the above-mentioned limitations, the radicalization of students influenced by external politics and frustration over the uncertainties about their future, trade union actions, and political interference in some instances have also strained the internal governance and management of universities. In addition, within universities themselves, there is often an unhealthy divide between academic and administrative staff, and also among faculties that limit the

synergy between the key players required for the smooth functioning of universities. In addition, internal governance and management have also been undermined by administrators who lack leadership skills and management experience, coupled with archaic, inefficient, and bureaucratic procedures, and poor information systems.

1.6.2. Sri Lanka Institute of Advanced Technological Education (SLIATE)

The Sri Lanka Institute of Advanced Technical Education (SLIATE) was formed in 1995, under the Sri Lanka Institute of Advanced Technical Education Act No. 29 of 1995. In 2001, the name of the institution was amended as Sri Lanka Institute of Advanced Technological Education (SLIATE). The SLIATE is currently governed by a Council, chaired by the Secretary of the Ministry in-charge of Higher Education, which oversees the function of ATIs, and determines their admission policies, programme offerings, programme content and course structure, academic staff workload, and other academic management matters. As ATIs are overseen by the Ministry in-charge of Higher Education, they have less autonomy than universities overseen by the UGC. Besides that, this arrangement does not favour the expansion of the sub-sector and the improvement of academic standards of its offerings.

1.6.3. Non-State Higher Education Institutions

There exists an ambiguity about the legal framework of registration and oversight mechanism for NSHEIs for the provision of educational opportunities on a fee-levying basis. As a result, there is a great variation in legal forms in which the NSHEIs have been registered and operated. Besides that, there is also a lack of clarity about the processes and mechanisms of governance and management, and the quality of education in NSHEIs. This is in contrast to what is operated in the State universities where there are strict rules and regulations, and guidelines with respect to entry qualification of staff, admission criteria and processes, and academic development and planning. There is also a general tendency among NSHEIs which make exaggerated and even misleading claims about the quality and standards of the study programmes, facilities and learner support services offered, and even about student achievements. Making such claims is a widespread practice in marketing campaigns and advertising for student recruitment. Such advertising campaigns have made higher education a commodity on offer to be purchased.

1.7. Conclusion

It is well-conceived that Sri Lanka lags behind the group of upper-middle-income countries, in terms of financing, access, quality and relevance of higher educational offerings. Addressing these three key issues to reach the desired objectives requires a series of synchronized actions and reforms in all aspects of higher education, namely: financing, access, human and physical resources, types of academic programmes, curricula, contents, teaching-learning and assessments methods, learner support services, quality assurance and accreditation, and regulations, and governance and management. Moreover, to advance as a middle-income country, Sri Lanka requires to acquire and use advanced technologies to enhance quality and productivity, and also to generate a continuous stream of research and innovations. Furthermore, to reap the full benefit of universities, frequent disruptions occurring in universities resulting from disruptive activities of students and trade unions need to be curtailed.

2. POLICY PROPOSALS AND RECOMMENDED STRATEGIC ACTIVITIES

Backed by a comprehensive status review, the policy proposal and recommended strategies are formulated in accordance with higher education sector-specific 11 core areas and accompanying directive principles as elaborated in Part III of the NEPF (2020-2030).

These 11 core areas include: i) Access, and Equity and Inclusiveness; ii) Academic Calendar, Curriculum Design, Content and Learning Outcomes; iii) Teaching-Learning Process and Assessments; iv) Learners and Learning Environment and Learners' Welfare; v) Benchmarking and Quality Assurance; vi) Research and Innovations, Technology Transfer, and Nurturing of Art and Culture; vii) Personality Development, Civic Consciousness, Patriotism, Employability and Entrepreneurial Skills; viii) Financing of Higher Education; ix) Quality of Human Resources; x) Quality of Physical Resources, and xi) Regulation, and Governance and Management .

This approach is taken, as stated previously, to ensure the policy planning process gives comprehensive coverage across all core areas and elements while giving due consideration to issues and gaps highlighted in the Status Review that impede the progressive developments of the higher education sector.

Core Area – HE 1: Access, and Equity and Inclusiveness

Directive Principles

- DP 1: The state assumes the responsibility of creating opportunities for those who are eligible to have access to higher education.
- DP 2: The State promotes the non-State education sector to operate in parallel with the state sector of education.
- DP 3: The State assures equity and inclusion in education where need-based support is made available to all students to thrive within the education system, regardless of gender, race, religion, social status, geographical location, or disabilities.
- DP 4: The State assures the opportunities for all eligible students, regardless of any challenges they may have, to pursue higher education and receive instructions, and provides interventions, and assistance that enables them to meet success in higher education.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-HE 1.1: Broaden and expand access to higher education in national universities while ensuring equity and inclusiveness

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The UGC together with universities shall take steps to increase intake of students into the State universities annually at the rate of 5%, particularly for those programmes which show high employability.
- The UGC shall encourage and facilitate the established universities – Universities of Colombo, Peradeniya, Sri Jayawardenapura, and Kelaniya - to establish campuses in respective catchment areas (*in main cities of*

districts closer to the main campus) devoted primarily for undergraduate education.

- The UGC and the Open University of Sri Lanka shall take steps to expand the coverage and services of open and distance modes of learning with further strengthening of physical and human resources and the capacity of regional centres and study centres, along with the adoption of modern teaching-learning and assessment tools and techniques.
- The UGC and universities shall take steps to expedite the ongoing reforms to streamline the external degree programmes (EDPs) – that include the improvement of operational aspects of Centres of Open and Distance Learning, limiting the intake to twice the number of internal intakes, revising and updating study programme curricula in a regular manner, application of ICT-based tools and adopting on-line delivery, initiating a quality assurance system and formalizing partnerships with external training institutions that provide instruction classes for students of EDPs offered by the State universities.
- The NEC together with the UGC shall take steps to review the current university admission policy and amend the policy to ensure the meritocracy is the prime criteria while giving due consideration to equity and inclusiveness.
- The NEC together with the UGC shall take steps to review and revise the university admission process and practices to implement appropriate measures to reduce the time gaps between G.C.E. (A/L) examinations and the release of results and Z scores, and the release of cut-off marks and selection of students and commencement academic programmes for new entrants.
- The UGC together with universities shall take steps to fully implement the Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework (SLQF) to facilitate horizontal and vertical mobility of students between programmes within as well as among the State universities and HEIs.

Policy-HE 1.2:

Strengthen and expand access to job-oriented advanced technical education and training programmes

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The MoE shall take steps to reform the Sri Lanka Institute of Advanced Technological Education (SLIATE) and upgrade the SLIATE to a Degree-Awarding Institute (DAI) status, thus providing opportunities for SLIATE entrants to read for the higher national diploma with the option to read for a top-up degree.
- The SLIATE shall take steps to improve the quality and relevance of study programmes through curricula reforms by adopting SLQF and outcome-based, student-centered teaching-learning approach with a concurrent increase in student admission on an annual basis into technical and job-oriented education programmes.
- The MoE shall seek international donor assistance to upgrade the competencies of academic staff and physical resources of SLIATE and its ATI network.
- The MoE together with the State Ministry of Skills Development to take steps to promote vocational and technical education as an attractive socially recognized alternative tertiary educational pathway by expanding the scope, relevance, and depth of training provisions and providing opportunities to earn degrees through UNIVOTEC and its network of University Colleges (*This is also addressed under the Volume IV: Policy Proposal and Recommended Strategic Activities on TVET*).

- The MoE together with the State Ministry of Skills Development to take steps to upgrade selected Colleges of Technology functioning under the Department of Technical Education to Polytechnic Institutes (*under the City University concept*) with emphasis on providing upward mobility for NVQ qualifiers in the vocational education system (*This will also be addressed under the Volume IV: Policy Proposal and Recommended Strategic Activities on TVET*).

Policy-HE 1.3:

Expand Bachelor's degree level training opportunities in disciplines with high employability so as to produce a professional workforce for emerging local and international job markets

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The MoE together with the UGC shall make a policy decision that future expansion of enrolment in the State and non-State HEIs shall be focused mainly on the STEM (*science, technology, engineering and mathematics*) study programmes.
- The MoE together with the UGC and relevant Ministries shall take steps through legislative enactments to establish special purpose universities for emerging areas of importance that are experiencing growing demand in national and international job-markets: eg. indigenous medicine, paramedical sciences, sports sciences and teacher education with a special admission scheme that provides the provision for lateral entry and exists.
- The MoE together with the UGC and special-purpose universities shall take steps to establish and operate public-public and public-private partnerships for arranging apprenticeship training opportunities for undergraduates of special-purpose universities.

Policy-HE 1.4:

Promote and regulate private sector participation in higher education

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The MoE together with the UGC shall take steps to amend the existing Universities Act No. 16 of 1978 to establish regulatory and quality assurance mechanisms operated under the purview of UGC to regulate and monitor non-State higher education institutions (*This aspect is comprehensively dealt with under the Core Area 11: Regulation, and Governance and Management*).
- The State shall continue the provision of financial assistance as concessionary loans for qualified students to seek higher education in MoHE/UGC recognized State and non-State Degree-Awarding Institutes.

Core Area – HE 2: Academic Calendar, Curriculum Design, Content and Learning Outcomes

Directive Principles

- DP 1: University education must pave the way for every individual to reach the full potential to make him/her productively employable in the 'world of work'.
- DP 2: Curricula of undergraduate level education must offer outcome-based, constructively aligned, multidisciplinary, integrated, and holistic education across the sciences, social sciences, humanities, management, and sports and health sciences, in order to impart a wide range of competencies in undergraduates those that are required for them to succeed in the dynamic and competitive world.
- DP 3: Undergraduate curriculum design must allow sufficient choice for students to customize their study programmes by offering cross-disciplinary and cross-faculty courses according to their preferences and employment market trends.
- DP 4: Flexibility in higher learning must be ensured by offering multiple entry and exit pathways so as to promote lifelong learning and continuing professional advancement.
- DP 5: All undergraduate curricula should undergo continuous monitoring and periodic evaluation, and based on the results of these monitoring and evaluation processes, the curricula should undergo modification to suit the intended purposes and national requirements.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-HE 2.1: Academic calendar, and programme and course curricula must be aimed at facilitating the acquisition of higher-order cognitive and non-cognitive skills that are aligned with the needs of the 'world of work'

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The UGC and universities shall take steps to re-structure and synchronize the academic year in the following manner: Semester I = 15 weeks of classes + 4 weeks of study leave and examination, Semester break = 2 weeks, Semester II = 15 weeks of classes + 4 weeks of study leave and examination, a short semester of 12 weeks duration $\{52 - (19 + 2 + 19) = 12\}$ within the annual calendar that could be used for student-centered learning activities such as 'industrial training', student research projects, and community/volunteer services.
- The UGC and universities shall take steps to expedite the ongoing curricular reforms of all study programmes by adopting outcome-based education and student-centered teaching-learning and assessment approach and integrating non-cognitive skills development into curricula of all disciplines and specialities.
- The UGC through circular instructions shall ensure that all universities/faculties adopt curricula that consist of a core programme and supplementary/optional programme/courses in order to encourage the students to sign up for cross-faculty and cross-disciplinary course offerings of their choice.
- The UGC shall take steps to design and issue circular instructions and guidelines for all universities/faculties

to include compulsory student research project of at least 6 credits and an externship/industrial training component with a minimum of 15 credits into the curricula of all study programmes, so as to facilitate undergraduates to engage in inquiry or problem-based learning in the 'world of work' in a practical way.

- The UGC and all universities shall take steps to allocate required funds to faculties/departments to facilitate the implementation of student research projects and compulsory externship/industrial training components.

Policy-HE 2.2:

Curricula of all study programmes must allow sufficient flexibility for students to customize a study programme by selecting supplementary/optional courses from a “multidisciplinary basket of non-core courses” to suit his/her choice for promoting employability in the “world of work”

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The UGC shall take steps to design and issue circular instructions and guidelines for all universities/faculties to offer foundation and advanced courses in disciplines/subjects as supplementary programmes/courses that would widen the competency profile of undergraduates and allow students of any discipline/faculty to sign up and follow such courses.
- The UGC through circular instructions shall take steps to ensure all universities establish a central mechanism for fixing and coordinating synchronized academic calendar across faculties/study programmes, timetable setting, allocation of lecture/practical venues, and an inter-faculty credit transfer system.

Policy-HE 2.3:

All curricula must be reviewed and reformed at periodic intervals

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The UGC shall take steps to issue circular instructions and guidelines to all universities to establish Curriculum Development Committees in each Faculty and Senate Curriculum Development/Academic Development and Planning Committee with representations from Faculty-level Curriculum Development Committees to facilitate the periodic review and monitoring, and updating of study programme curricula at periodic intervals.
- The UGC shall take steps to design and issue circular instructions and guidelines on curriculum development and revision, and strictly monitor the implementation of the prescribed guidelines across all universities and faculties through the respective UGC Standing Committees and the quality assurance system.
- The UGC through its Standing Committee on Staff Development to review and expand the scope and duration of the current Induction Training Programme offered to new recruits into the academic staff so as to ensure all academic staff members are provided with an extended in-service training programme on curriculum development along with modern teaching and training and assessment methods.

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The UGC through circular instructions shall take steps to ensure all universities offer opportunities at a concessionary fee for all undergraduates to acquire a supplementary qualification at Certificate or Diploma level in a chosen speciality such as IT, English, Business Management, etc. while reading for their respective undergraduate study programmes.
- All universities shall take steps to strengthen the existing Centres of Open and Distance Education to coordinate the above-mentioned activity.

Core Area – HE 3: Teaching-Learning Process and Assessments

Directive Principles

- DP 1: Teaching-learning process must emphasize conceptual understanding rather than rote learning and learning-for-examinations.
- DP 2: Teaching-learning process shall embrace as much as possible learner-centered and activity-based teaching-learning methods so as to promote experiential/authentic learning that enables the learner to construct her/his knowledge and skills through active participation in the learning process.
- DP 3: Curriculum delivery should adopt blended modes of teaching-learning with the extensive use of technology, along with the provision of adequate opportunities for hands-on learning and open-ended exploration using ICT applications.
- DP 4: Assessment and certification of students' achievement should be based on both formative and summative assessments that are designed to ensure validity and reliability.
- DP 5: All study programmes must adopt ICT-based, technology-enhanced teaching-learning and assessment methods so as to promote the blended approach for teaching-learning-assessments as well as to build resilience to cope with unexpected disruptions such as what has been experienced with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-HE 3.1:

All universities and faculties must promote the adoption of learner-centered and activity-based teaching-learning methods so as to promote experiential/authentic learning that enables the learner to construct her/his knowledge and skills through active participation in the learning process

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The UGC in liaison with the MoE and WB-AHEAD project (*or with future project*) shall take steps to establish a centralized human resource development facility called “National Institute of Staff Development for Higher Education” and take steps to train a core group of academics and executive staff officers drawn from universities as master trainers through local and overseas training.
- The UGC working in liaison with the Standing Committee on Staff Development shall conduct a rapid appraisal of SDC network and take steps to revamp the focus and strengthen its resource base and capacities.
- The UGC through circular instructions shall give directives and guidelines to all universities and faculties to take steps through respective Staff Development Centres to improve the knowledge and skills of academics on applications of modern educational technologies.
- The UGC through circular instructions shall issue directives and guidelines to all universities and faculties to adopt learner-centered and activity-based teaching-learning and assessment methods for undergraduate training.

Policy-HE 3.2:

Curriculum delivery should adopt the blended mode of teaching-learning with the extensive use of ICT-based technologies and applications

Recommended Strategic Activities

- All universities shall take steps to improve the knowledge and skills of academics on the application of ICT-based tools and applications including the use of on-line platform for delivery of lectures and conducting discussion classes and assessments.
- All universities shall take steps to amend the existing examination by-laws and rules and regulations to allow the application of ICT-based tools for all forms of assessments and examinations.
- All universities shall take steps to improve ICT infrastructure and online learning platform/learning management system with the provision of technical backup services.
- The UGC shall take steps to allocate the required financial provisions to Lanka Education Research Network (LEARN), which is hosting the e-learning network, to upgrade its network capacity and functionality (*More specific recommendations are given under the Core Area - HE 10: Quality of Physical Resources*).

Policy-HE 3.3:

Evaluation and certification of students' achievement should be based on both formative and summative assessments

Recommended Strategic Activities

- All universities shall take steps to promote the adoption of both continuous/formative and summative assessments in student evaluations in accordance with the prescribed best practices.
- All universities shall take steps through appropriate staff development programmes to improve the competencies of the academic staff in the application of modern assessment principles, methods and tools, and techniques.
- All universities shall take steps to promote the adoption of modern psychometric practices such as test blueprinting, standard-setting, and post-exam item analysis into the assessment system.

Core Area – HE 4: Learners and Learner Support, Learning Environment, and Learners' Welfare**Directive Principles:**

- DP 1: Learners must be guided throughout the learning process.
- DP 2: Learners must be educated about the options available in learning pathways and career opportunities.
- DP 3: Facilities and living conditions provided to students must be optimized so as to improve the quality of the life of students.
- DP 4: Student life in educational institutions must be made exciting and rewarding.
- DP 5: Students must be educated to become partners of institutional quality culture and empower them as a responsible stakeholder group in the internal quality assurance process.

Policies and Strategies**Policy-HE 4.1:**

Guide the students through the academic and student counselling process to facilitate their smooth transition from school to university education and foster their academic, intellectual, and cultural pursuits

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The UGC working through the relevant Standing Committees shall take steps to issue circular instructions and guidelines to ensure all universities have well established Student Welfare Unit, headed by a Director/ Welfare under the direct purview of the Vice-Chancellor/ Deputy Vice-Chancellor.
- The UGC working through the relevant Standing Committees shall take steps to design and issue circular

instructions and guidelines to ensure all universities have well established and resourceful academic counselling and mentoring services operating at the faculty level, and make the engagement in academic counselling and mentoring a part of academic service functions that every academic has to perform.

- All universities shall take steps to train academic staff on academic and student counselling, and mentoring through continuing professional development programmes offered by Staff Development Centres, and also through the National Institute of Staff Development (*To be established under the purview of the UGC; Refer Core Area HE - 3: Teaching-Learning Process and Assessment; Policy-HE 3.1 and Core Area - 11: Regulation, Governance and Management; Policy-HE 11.1*).

Policy-HE 4.2:

Empower students through career guidance and career counselling to make well-informed decisions concerning their education, prospective careers, and their future lives

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The UGC shall take steps to reactivate the Standing Committee on Career Guidance and Counselling to guide, foster, and monitor the career guidance and counselling services provided by universities and HEIs.
- The UGC working through the Standing Committee on Career Guidance and Counselling shall take steps to review the current status of career guidance and career counselling services offered in all universities and HEIs, and take decisive measures, through circular instructions to reform and upgrade the existing career guidance and counselling service as an academic support service in the following lines;
 - Allocate an adequate cadre with appropriate promotional prospects for those who are employed as career guidance instructors and counsellors, and
 - Establish/strengthen the “Central Facility” in each university with a network of career guidance instructors and counsellors assigned to faculties.
- The UGC, in liaison with a suitable postgraduate institute or faculty shall take steps to introduce postgraduate level training programmes for the staff of the career guidance and counselling services to improve their competencies and career promotions.

Policy-HE 4.3:

Student harassment, gender violence, and inhuman ‘ragging’ must be condemned and eradicated from all universities

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The UGC through its Standing Committee on Career Guidance and Student Counselling shall take steps to broaden the scope of the induction programme/orientation programme offered to incoming freshmen students to include appropriate instructional and practical learning sessions to instil human values, mannerism, etiquette, ethics, and moral values and practices, and issue guidelines to all universities and HEIs for compliance.
- The UGC shall take steps to design and issue circular instructions and guidelines to all universities and HEIs to reorganize and strengthen the Student Welfare System, Marshal System, and Proctorial System in

all universities and HEIs so as to eliminate any room and space for student harassment, gender violence, intimidation, or ragging.

- The UGC together with all universities and HEIs shall take steps to prosecute the perpetrators through internal disciplinary procedures as well as through Courts of Law under the Ragging Act, No. 20 of 1998.

Core Area – HE 5: Benchmarking and Quality Assurance

Directive Principles

- DP 1: National Quality Assurance system must cover all State and non-State higher education institutions.
- DP 2: The concepts of quality and quality culture must be institutionalized in all types of higher education institutions by internalizing the nationally prescribed best practices, standards, guidelines for all aspects of higher education.
- DP 3: National accreditation systems benchmarked against international criteria and standards must be in place for accrediting programmes of study offered by all types of higher education institutions so as to promote the mobility of graduates within and across borders.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-HE 5.1: Mandate of the UGC must be broadened to assign the responsibility of regulating and quality assurance of both the State universities and State and non-State HEIs with Degree-awarding Status

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The Ministry of Education and the UGC shall take steps to introduce appropriate amendments to the Universities Act No. 16 of 1978 to expand the role of UGC by establishing two Councils within its purview;
 - Regulatory Council to regulate State and non-State Degree-awarding HEIs, and
 - Quality Assurance Council (QAC) to cover both the State universities and State and non-State Degree-awarding HEIs.
- The UGC/QAC shall review at periodic intervals all State universities and State and non-State HEIs with DAI status, and the study programmes offered by them.
- The UGC/QAC shall take steps to review and update the existing QA Manuals (*i.e. QA Manual for Institutional Review and QA Manual for Study Programme Review*) in 5-year cycles so as to promote progressive advancement of quality and standards of the State universities and State and non-State HEIs with DAI status, and their study programmes.
- The UGC/QAC shall take steps to continue to build the capacity of a core group of the senior academic staff of the State universities and State and non-State HEIs with DAI status in quality assurance to lead internal quality assurance systems in their respective institutions and also to function as external QA reviewers.

Policy-HE 5.2:

All Universities and the State and non-State HEIs with DAI status must seek accreditation for their institutions and study programmes by the National Accreditation Council for Education

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The NEC in liaison with the Ministry of Education and the UGC shall take steps to establish a National Accreditation Council for Education through the appropriate legal enactments.
- The UGC shall issue circular instructions requiring all State universities and State and non-State HEIs with DAI status that are coming under their purview to seek accreditation for their institutions as well as for all study programmes offered by them from the designated National Accreditation Council for Education.

Core Area – HE 6: Research and Innovations, Technology Transfer, and Nurturing of Art and Culture**Directive Principles**

- DP 1: Universities and HEIs must function as centres of excellence in producing higher-order intellectuals, science and technology professionals, and high-quality research and innovations.
- DP 2: University system must be supported with appropriate legal and regulatory procedures, institutional support, and funding to create a conducive environment and intellectual freedom to engage in research and innovations, and technology transfer.
- DP 3: University academics must be provided with an institutional environment and freedom to explore culture, art, science, and environment.
- DP 4: Universities must function as catalytic centres in nurturing all forms of visual and performing arts, and culture.

Policies and Strategies**Policy-HE 6.1:**

Promote mission differentiation among universities in line with global developments thus enabling the established and resourceful universities that have already earned international recognition to become postgraduate and research universities

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The UGC shall take steps to adopt the following policies and strategies to promote mission differentiation among universities for fostering postgraduate education, and quality and standards in research and innovation;
 - Adopt a suitable mechanism and procedure (*such as a scorecard system*) for assessing resource profiles

of universities in terms of both physical and human resources, research and innovation outputs, and academic performance in terms of outcomes of external QA reviews, employability of graduates, international collaborations, income generation, etc., and promote those universities who perform well above the threshold to progress as postgraduate research universities,

- Once a university is declared as a postgraduate research university, it shall maintain the intake into undergraduate programmes at the existing level while expanding their postgraduate study programmes, particularly in research-based degrees,
- Adopt performance-based funding to support those universities identified as postgraduate research universities over and above its regular recurrent and capital cost,
- Encourage and facilitate those universities that are considered as postgraduate research universities to establish campuses focusing on undergraduate study programmes with the option given to high performing undergraduate students to seek transfers to the mother university,
- Encourage postgraduate research universities to explore possibilities of establishing off-shore campuses, and
- Review and amend the existing guidelines for granting research allowance for academics with the view to incentivize high-performing academics, and thereby to improve quality and standards of research and research outputs and outcomes.

Policy-HE 6.2:

Foster institutional environment for international collaboration in research and innovations and create a rewarding environment conducive for exploring science and technology

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The UGC through circular instruction shall direct all universities to establish an institutional mechanism to promote research and innovation, and international collaboration (*eg. Centre for Research and International Affairs, Research Councils, International Liaison Office, etc.*).
- All universities shall take steps to secure funding through Treasury allocations and also by engaging in income-generating activities to foster research and innovations, research information dissemination, commercialization of research, and international liaison.
- All universities shall take steps to establish and operate research awards and rewards systems for academics to recognize and reward those who perform exceptionally well in research and innovation.

Policy-HE 6.3:

Sri Lankan University system must function as catalytic centres for the promotion of Sri Lankan culture and all forms of visual and performing arts

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The UGC through circular instructions shall take steps to promote all universities to establish an institutional mechanism to promote Sri Lankan culture and all forms of visual and performing arts (*eg. establishment of*

Multicultural Centre, Arts Council, Drama Society, etc.).

- All universities shall take steps to promote staff and student engagements in organizing annual cultural events (*eg. Annual Drama Festival, Annual Film Festival, Annual Art Exhibition, etc.*).
- All universities shall allocate sufficient funds and establish required physical facilities to promote student and staff engagement in art and culture, and aesthetic pursuits.

Core Area – HE 7: Personality Development, Civic Consciousness, Patriotism, and Employability and Entrepreneurial Skills

Directive Principles

- DP 1: Higher education shall facilitate all-round personality development of students by promoting cognitive, physical, and psychosocial development of students while promoting behavioural, emotional, social, and spiritual maturity and instilling values, morals and ethics.
- DP 2: Education shall instil nationalism in students so as to promote affection towards Sri Lanka as the place of birth, its history, culture, and knowledge systems and traditions.
- DP 3: Education must imbue civic consciousness in students – empathy, respect for others, cleanliness, courtesy, democratic spirit, the spirit of service, respect for public property, logical and rational thinking, liberty, responsibility, accountability, pluralism, equality, and justice.
- DP 4: Higher education shall impart life skills/employability skills to students such as communication, cooperation, teamwork, leadership, managerial and entrepreneurial skills, and resilience.
- DP 5: All forms of education shall guide the students to acquire the right knowledge and skills and information necessary to identify and choose a better-fit career.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-HE 7.1: Education shall function as a vehicle to foster personality development, and inculcate civic consciousness, patriotism, and multiculturalism among undergraduates

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The UGC shall take steps to issue circular instructions to all universities and faculties prescribing essential components that should be included in the formal induction programme/orientation programme provided to incoming freshman students. These must include the following specific activities, in addition to other university-specific components;
 - Components that aim to promote civic consciousness – to inculcate human and constitutional values like empathy, respect for others, cleanliness, courtesy, democratic spirit, the spirit of service, respect for public property, logical and rational thinking, liberty, responsibility, accountability, pluralism, and equality in students, and

- Components that aim to promote patriotism – to educate all students to respect the land of their birth, respect others irrespective of ethnicity, and respect Sri Lanka as a unified nation.
- The UGC shall take steps to issue circular instructions and guidelines to all universities to include a personal development programme in the curricula of all study programmes in the following lines;
 - Introduce a dedicated programme for personality development that runs as a strand from the first year to the final year (*such as General Studies Strand*), aimed at providing academic, intellectual, and practical training to imbue students with emotional, social, and spiritual maturity, and instil values, morals and ethics in students,
 - Ensure the academic calendar of all study programmes include dedicated activities to facilitate student engagement in activities that promote civic consciousness and multiculturalism (*such as student societies, explorers' clubs, drama and film societies, multi-cultural events/festivals, etc.*),
 - The students must be guided to maintain a Portfolio of Learning that showcases both the work carried out within the said strand and the activities that they have got involved in while pursuing the core subject areas that promote emotional, social, and spiritual development, and
 - Both components (*course modules of the programme and Portfolio of Learning*) must be assessed, and marks must be counted for calculating the final aggregate marks of students in any given study programme.
- The UGC shall issue circular instructions and guidelines to all universities to establish a Multicultural Centre with required physical and human resources and finances to promote cross-cultural and social activities and aesthetic and spiritual pursuits.

Policy-HE 7.2:

University education must guide the undergraduates to make informed decisions on education and career choices, and instil employability and entrepreneurial skills

Recommended Strategic Activities

- All universities working through the Senate, Curriculum Development and Review Committee/Academic Development and Planning Committee shall promote the adoption of outcome-based, student-centered teaching-learning while giving adequate emphasis on the development of soft skills such as communication, interpersonal skills, teamwork, leadership, managerial and entrepreneurial skills, resilience and perseverance.
- The UGC through the Standing Committee on Career Guidance and Counseling Services shall take steps to review the human resource availability and capacity of the existing Career Guidance and Counselling Services of universities and introduce appropriate reforms in all aspects – roles and functions of Career Guidance and Counselling Units (CGCUs), institutional structure, physical and financial resources, and scheme of recruitment and career progression of staff – to make CGCU as an important service unit in all universities.
- All universities must take steps to strengthen Career Guidance and Career Counselling Services with adequate human and physical resources and finances to provide career information and career counselling services – such as soft skills development programmes, guidance and counselling, university outreach/extension programmes, job fairs, etc.

Core Area – HE 8: Financing of Higher Education

Directive Principles

- DP 1: The State is committed to guaranteeing free education from early childhood education to tertiary education.
- DP 2: The State is committed to making an incremental increase of public expenditure over the next 10 years on education from the current level of 2.1% to 4.5 % of GDP while improving the need-based fund distribution and efficiency of utilization.
- DP 3: The State is committed to providing student aid for education as grants and concessionary loans for eligible students.
- DP 4: The State encourages philanthropic private and community participation in education by providing financial/tax incentives within a conducive regulatory framework to encourage private sector to establish and operate higher education institutes on not-for-profit basis.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-HE 8.1: Promote the adoption of strategic planning and management approach by universities and HEIs for improving the efficiency of fund distribution and utilization

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The UGC through appropriate circular instructions shall facilitate all universities and HEIs to establish a dedicated institutional mechanism for Strategic Planning and Monitoring such as the Office of Strategic Planning and Monitoring, headed by the Vice-Chancellor or Deputy Vice-Chancellor.
- All universities shall prepare a strategic plan and annual action plans coupled with financial plans on regular basis, and all annual budgeting that must be coupled with the strategic plan and financial plans approved by the Council.
- As empowered by the Universities Act No. 16 of 1978, the UGC shall resume its responsibility of annual budget preparation for the entire university sector based on submissions from individual universities prepared in accordance with the respective strategic plans and annual action plans and financial plans, and negotiating with the Treasury to secure the required funds.
- The Councils of all universities shall undertake regular monitoring of the implementation of the strategic plans and accompanied annual action plans and financial plans of the universities.

Policy-HE 8.2:

All the State universities must engage in income-generating activities to supplement the government grant

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The UGC through circular instructions shall issue guidelines to all universities and HEIs in calculating the rates applicable to user fees for registration, accommodation, sports facilities, and library services, and allow the income accrued through such fees to be accumulated in the University Development Fund.
- All Universities shall take steps to embark on income-generating activities through the provision of fee-levying certificate, diploma, and degree (*both undergraduate and postgraduate*) courses/programmes to external candidates, and the income accrued from such activities must be channelled to Faculty and University Development Funds.
- All Universities shall take steps to establish a University Consultancy Services Unit to facilitate the bidding for consultancy, advisory and technical services to the public and the income accrued from such activities must be apportioned to staff members, Unit Development Fund, and University Development Fund.
- The UGC together with all universities shall take steps to promote Sri Lanka as an attractive destination for foreign students through advertising and by increasing the quota allocated for students while taking steps to strengthen facilities provided for them.
- The UGC shall take steps to issue circular instructions and guidelines to all universities and HEIs to establish and operate of Public-Private Partnerships for academic, research, and research commercialization activities, and to allow the proceeds from such activities to be proportionally apportioned to relevant staff members and channelled to development funds of the university and respective faculties and departments.

Policy-HE 8.3:

Promote private investments in higher education by providing financial incentives within a conducive regulatory framework to prospective investors to establish and operate higher education institutions on not-for-profit basis

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The MoE and the UGC shall take urgent steps to establish a quality assurance and an accreditation mechanism that covers both the State Universities, and State and non-State Degree Awarding HEIs (*as proposed in Core Area - HE 5: Benchmarking and Quality Assurance; Policy 5.1 and 5.2 and Core Area - HE 11: Regulation, Governance, and Management; Policy 11.1*)
- The State shall provide fiscal incentives to encourage private investment in higher education.
- The State shall continue to provide grants and concessionary loans for eligible students to follow study programmes leading to degrees in non-State HEIs operating with the approval of the MoHE/UGC.

Core Area – HE 9: Quality of Human Resources

Directive Principles

- DP 1: Recruitment and promotion of all categories of staff must be made purely on merit and free of any undue influence.
- DP 2: Academic and academic support staff must be provided with adequate opportunities for post-recruitment training and continuing professional development.
- DP 3: Academic and academic support staff and non-academic staff must be provided with a conducive working environment and service conditions.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-HE 9.1: All categories of staff recruitment and promotion must be based exclusively on merit and on-the-job performance

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The UGC shall take steps to review and update all staff recruitment procedures prescribed through a multitude of UGC Administrative Circulars to suit the current context to ensure recruitment is primarily based on academic and professional qualifications, merit, and proven performance.
- The UGC shall take steps to revisit the current promotion scheme including the procedure for granting annual increments and promotions for all categories of staff – academic, executive, academic support, technical, and support staff- and issue new circular instructions to ensure increments and promotions are granted on the basis of performance-based assessments.

Policy-HE 9.2: All categories of staff must be provided with in-service, continuing professional development programmes aimed at imparting new knowledge and skills to promote the enhancement of professional standards

Recommended Strategic Activities

- All universities shall take steps to obtain enhanced annual allocations for human resource development and also take steps to generate sufficient funds to facilitate the post-recruitment training for academic staff, executive staff, academic support staff, and technical staff.
- The UGC shall take steps, through appropriate amendments to the Universities Act No. 16 of 1978, to establish a dedicated institute for staff development designated as the National Institute of Staff Development for Higher Education, and to improve its technical capacity through the ongoing WB/AHEAD Project or through a future WB-funded Higher Education project (*This is also emphasized in Core Area HE - 3: Teaching-Learning Process and Assessment; Policy-HE 3.1*).

- The UGC shall take steps to design and issue an administrative circular instruction to ensure new recruits into all non-academic cadre (*i.e. executive, academic support, non-academic administrative, technical, etc.*) are subjected to a compulsory post-recruitment induction training programme and to make successful completion of the induction programme as a pre-requisite for conformation in their respective posts.
- The UGC shall take steps to design and issue an administrative circular instruction to make it compulsory for all staff (*excluding skilled and unskilled labour categories*) to engage in continuing professional development programmes and to make the completion of a minimum number of CPD training programmes as a requirement for annual increments.

Policy-HE 9.3:

All categories of staff must be provided with conducive working conditions to maximize employee satisfaction and outputs

Recommended Strategic Activities

- All universities shall take steps to make determined efforts to provide optimal working conditions for the staff – such as facilities for housing, recreation, welfare, etc., to create positive working environments and service conditions.
- All universities shall take steps to facilitate staff welfare activities – such as staff associations, workers' unions, welfare associations, etc., and annual financial allocation (*through earned funds*) must be made to such entities to encourage holding social-cultural activities on annual basis.

Core Area 10: Quality of Physical Resources

Directive Principles

- DP 1: All higher education institutions, irrespective of geographical location and student number, must be provided with minimum requirements of teaching facilities.
- DP 2: All higher education institutions, irrespective of geographical location and student number must be provided with all required common amenities.
- DP 3: All higher education institutions, irrespective of geographical location and student number must be provided with ICT facilities including internet connectivity manned by technically competent personnel.
- DP 4: All higher education institutions which accommodate students with special needs must be equipped with the required infrastructure and teaching facilities required to cater for such students.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-HE 10.1: All the State universities must be resourced with minimum requirements of teaching facilities

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The NEC in liaison with the UGC shall take steps to develop and issue standards and norms for physical resources for universities and HEIs and to continue to revise them regularly to accommodate recent developments.
- All universities shall take steps to establish Capital Project Planning and Facility Management Units in respective universities manned by qualified engineering hands to undertake facility maintenance work, regularly assess physical resource requirements in liaison with all faculties, institutes, centres, etc., and facilitate the development of physical resource development master plan to secure funding from the Treasury to acquire all required facilities on a priority basis.
- All universities shall take steps to provide well-resourced and well-maintained teaching-learning facilities (*i.e. classrooms, lecture halls, auditoriums, etc., fitted with required audiovisual aids and internet connectivity, teaching laboratories, libraries, IT centres, etc.*).
- The State shall seek external donor assistance at concessionary terms and conditions to address the immediate physical and technical resource gaps and deficiencies.

Policy-HE 10.2: All Universities irrespective of geographical location and student number must be resourced with all required common amenities

Recommended Strategic Activities

- All universities shall take steps to establish a Council Standing Committee for Lands and Facility Development and Management with appropriate Terms of Reference to guide, supervise and monitor matters related to lands, buildings, capital development, and facility maintenance work.
- All universities shall take steps to strengthen the Capital Project Planning and Facility Management Units with required technical personnel and adequate resources.
- All universities shall take steps through the Capital Project Management and Facility Management Units, to assess the needs and status of common amenities and take appropriate steps to construct new facilities as required and maintain, repair/refurbish existing common amenities on regular basis.

Policy-HE 10.3:

All universities must be provided with IT connectivity, and software and hardware facilities that are manned by competent personnel

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The UGC shall take steps to allocate an annual Treasury Grant to Lanka Education and Research Network (LEARN), to expand and strengthen the IT connectivity and video conferencing facilities to all universities through an online platform (*This is also emphasized in Core Area HE - 3: Teaching-Learning Process and Assessment; Policy-HE 3.2*).
- The UGC shall take steps to provide funds to LEARN to build a centrally manned Moodle Service Centre and acquire physical and human resources and software to provide free open-source, centralized Moodle as an online platform and other interactive learning platforms (*such as Zoom, MS Teams, etc.,*) and media space (*such as Kaltura media space*).
- All universities shall take steps to establish and maintain well-resourced IT Centres and Faculty/School level IT units that provide technical services and guidance to faculties/departments to facilitate the use of computer-based applications and tools for teaching-learning-assessment in academic programme delivery.
- All universities shall take steps to adopt MIS and other applications for general administration, including the use of electronic signatures for transactions.

Policy-HE 10.4:

All universities must be equipped with the required infrastructure and teaching facilities to accommodate students with special needs

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The UGC shall take steps to provide additional funding to support universities and HEIs to cater for students with special needs.
- All universities shall take steps to provide the infrastructure and teaching facilities required to cater to students with special needs. All buildings must provide facilities to offer easy access to staff and students with special needs.

Core Area – HE 11: Regulation, and Governance and Management

Directive Principles

- DP 1: The State assumes the responsibility for setting the policy and regulatory framework for all State universities and State and non-State degree-awarding HEIs.
- DP 2: The State through the UGC as the apex regulatory body ensures accountability and efficiency of governance and management of all State universities and State and non-State degree-awarding HEIs.
- DP 3: All the State universities shall aspire and work towards becoming semi-autonomous higher education

institutions with high quality and standards in all their core functions.

DP 4: All the State universities must take steps to create a vital link between higher management, staff, and students to optimize the tri-patriate alliance among three key stakeholders.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-HE 11.1: While the Ministry in-charge of the subject of Higher Education taking the responsibility for policy, funding, infrastructure development, and oversight, the UGC shall be vested with regulatory matters including quality assurance of universities and HEIs

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The Ministry in-charge of the subject of Higher Education and the UGC to take steps to critically review and amend Universities Act No. 16 of 1978 to broaden the mandate and powers of the UGC to make it a more effective regulatory body covering all matters including quality assurance relating to higher education, covering the State universities and State and non-State degree-awarding HEIs. In addition, through these amendments the following three subsidiary arms of the UGC must be established (*this aspect is also dealt with under the Policy-HE 5.2*);
 - Regulatory Council for Degree Awarding Institutions covering both the State and non-State Higher Education Institutions,
 - Quality Assurance Council for the State universities and State and non-State degree-awarding HEIs, and
 - National Institute of Staff Development for Higher Education.

Policy-HE 11.2: Through regulatory provisions, all State universities shall be granted greater autonomy while holding them accountable for fund management, efficiency, and performance

Recommended Strategic Activities

- All the State universities shall take urgent steps to improve the governance and management system by adopting standard operating procedures, building human resource capacity, particularly of executive staff, coupled with appraisal and reward systems, and regular monitoring through an internal auditing mechanism.
- The UGC shall take steps through its internal auditing system which shall have formal links with internal auditing units of universities to undertake regular monitoring of governance and management and performance of the State universities and HEIs.
- The Governing Councils of the State universities shall undertake regular monitoring of the performance of respective universities with respect to their academic, research, and service outputs.
- The UGC shall take steps through administrative circular instruction and guidelines to grant provisions for all universities and HEIs to establish and operate public-private partnerships.

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The MoE and UGC shall take steps to introduce an appropriate amendment to the existing Universities Act No. 16 of 1978, to provide provision for all universities to have three Deputy Vice-Chancellors to support the Vice-Chancellor in three important aspects of university affairs, namely, i) academic affairs and quality assurance, ii) student welfare and counselling, and iii) research and international liaison.
- All State universities shall take steps to make special efforts to increase liaison among the higher management, staff, and students.
- All State universities shall take steps to promote the liaison with alumni associations and the community.

PART IV- VOLUME IV

**POLICY PROPOSALS AND
RECOMMENDED STRATEGIC
ACTIVITIES ON TECHNICAL AND
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND
TRAINING**



1. STATUS REVIEW

1.1. Introduction

The Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), as we know it today, had its beginnings in Sri Lanka in 1893 when the first Technical College was established at Maradana. In the period after independence in 1948, many TVET institutions were established, and from 1990 onwards attempts have been made to coordinate different training institutions to deliver quality training programmes for diverse target groups. These progressive developments have led to the formulation and adoption of the National Vocational Qualification Framework (NVQF) in 2004. The NVQF facilitates the TVET trainees to move up progressively from certificate levels to vocational diplomas and degrees. This upward mobility was further facilitated by establishing Colleges of Technology and the University of Vocational Technology (UoVT) to conduct National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 5 and 6 National Diploma courses, and NVQ Level 7-degree programmes, respectively. Parallel to that the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC) and TVET institutions have introduced many programmes for upgrading the skills of workers already employed in the industry.

Despite these improvements in the TVET sector, all types of industry sectors in the country continue to experience shortages of skilled workers. On the other hand, there has been rising youth unemployment. Therefore, the TVET sector which has been considered as an alternative form of the tertiary education sector is in dire need of reforms to bridge the demand for and supply of craft and middle-level technical and vocational skills and address the chronic unemployment among youth in Sri Lanka.

1.2. Current Organizational Structure of the TVET Sector

At present, the State Ministry of Skills Development, Vocational Training, and Research and Innovation (*hereafter referred to as the Ministry*) is the line ministry in-charge of the TVET sector in Sri Lanka. The numerous State institutions that are coming under the purview of the Ministry are:

- a. Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC) – which functions as the apex regulatory body of the TVET sector.
- b. Public sector training providers with the primary responsibility in providing technical and vocational education and training.
 - Department of Technical Education and Training (DTET)
 - National Apprentice and Industrial Training Authority (NAITA)
 - Vocational Training Authority of Sri Lanka (VTA)
 - Ceylon - German Technical Training Institute (CGTTI)
 - University of Vocational Technology (UoVT)
 - Ocean University of Sri Lanka (OCUSL)
 - Sri Lanka Institute of Printing

In addition, there are many public sector sectorial training institutions established and operated by other Ministries and industry lead bodies. In addition, there are numerous private and NGO sector training providers that also play a complementary role in developing a skilled workforce.

1.3. Salient Features of the TVET Sector

- NVQ framework with 7 levels of qualifications was established in 2004, and Sri Lanka was the first South Asian country to establish a qualification framework for the TVET sector.
- There are 1,097 public sector TVET centres including 74 NAITA centres, 295 VTA centres, 30 Technical Colleges and 9 Colleges of Technology of DTET, and 54 training centres of NYSC.
- According to the TVEC Labour Market Bulletin (2019), 250,690 trainees have been enrolled in TVET courses in 2019 with 142,906 males and 107,784 females. In the same year, 176,080 trainees have completed the courses with 97,757 males and 78,323 females. The completed number includes the enrolments in previous years in courses with more than 1-year duration. This number includes both training of school leavers as well as skill upgrading training provided for already employed persons.
- The numbers enrolled and completed vocational training in 2019 were approximately 161,000 and 111,000, respectively. This may include enrolments and completions in part-time, short-term training courses too.
- For courses in the construction sector, enrolment of males and female students in 2019 was 29,004 and 5,500, respectively. Corresponding completion numbers were 19,943 and 2,776, respectively.
- For courses of the wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles, and motorcycles, enrolment of male and female students was 13,737 and 1,294, respectively. Corresponding completion numbers were 7,649 and 881, respectively.
- In 2019, a total number of 78,007 NVQ certificates had been issued including 5,210 NVQ Certificates to industry employees through the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) approach. However, the number of NVQ certificates issued was much less than the number completed as many TVET courses were not converted to NVQ Framework.
- TVEC in cooperation with NAITA and UoVT has developed 278 NVQ Level 1 to 4 National Competency Standards (NCSs) and Competency-based Training (CBT) curricula, and 68 NVQ levels 5 and 6 NCSs and CBT curricula.

1.4. Current Status, Issues, and Gaps

The TVET sector is very diverse in terms of size, resources, target populations, and quality of training. Therefore, a rational approach is made to address sector issues and gaps in under sector-specific themes or core areas, i) Access and Enrolment, ii) Qualification Framework, National Competency Standards, and Curricula, iii) Training Facilities and Learning Environment, iv) Quality Assurance in Technical and Vocational Education and Training, v) Human Resources Development and Management, vi) Financing of Technical and Vocational Education and Training, vii) Regulation, and Governance and Management, and viii) Data, Information and Research.

1.4.1. Access and enrolment

Despite having a widespread network of TVET institutions, most of the courses are operated below the capacity due to inadequate enrolments and high dropout rates both of which require urgent attention. Using the primary grade entry data in 2004, it was estimated that due to various reasons, about 245,000 children drop out annually at different stages of general education. Out of this group, approximately about 72% may join with public and private vocational training system while around 28% may join the unskilled labour force of which a sizable portion may get accumulated into a group which is often referred to as 'Not in Education, Employment or Training' (NEET) group.

1.4.1.1. Career guidance and counselling service

A network of Career Guidance and Counselling Centres (CGCCs) has been established to address the under-enrolment and high dropout rates in TVET programmes. In parallel, most of the schools also have established School Guidance and Counselling Services (SGCSs) to provide guidance and information related to educational pathways and career prospects. However, both these networks are in need of improved facilities to gain access to up-to-date labour market information as well as greater collaboration among key agencies.

1.4.1.2. Social marketing

The Ministry responsible for TVET with the assistance of foreign-assisted projects from time to time has launched many social marketing programmes to inculcate positive thinking towards the TVET stream and vocational occupations among youth. However, such programmes did not achieve the objective as they functioned only for a short period in an *ad-hoc* manner and therefore, the efforts were not sustained.

1.4.1.3. Trainee support system

The majority of TVET students belong to the lower middle class or poor strata of society and they are indeed in need of financial support to meet their training expenses. Such support for TVET students is further justified by the existence of bursaries and *Mahapola* payments given to students in the State university system. NAITA, VTA, and DTET have been extending financial and logistic supports to trainees from time to time but they are not uniformly applied across all institutions. Further, the TVET institutions do not get sufficient funds to pay allowances in a timely manner, and as such, they are usually burdened with the accumulation of unpaid arrears. Nevertheless, as a welcome move, the Budget-2020 had proposed to pay a monthly allowance for students in TVET and it has now been implemented for trainees in NVQ level 1 to 4 courses.

During on-the-job or apprenticeship training, many employers pay some daily allowance to trainees. When international literature is reviewed, many countries have a culture as well as legislation to make it compulsory for employers to pay an allowance to trainees as they contribute to the output of their establishments.

1.4.1.4. Inclusive TVET programmes for persons with disabilities

As per the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) ratified by the Government of Sri Lanka in 2016, a disability of a person is a combination of impairments of the person and attitudinal and environmental barriers that prevents participation in society on an equal basis with others. In order to minimize those disabling effects, barriers should be either minimized or removed by making reasonable adjustments to physical and environmental requirements without giving undue advantage to persons with disabilities.

Going along in this approach, the TVEC and TVET institutions have introduced many interventions and activities to promote the training of persons with PwDs such as adopting the International Labour Organization (ILO) prescribed strategy of TVET provisions for vulnerable people, offering a grant scheme to support PwDs enrolled in courses, and introducing Reasonable Adjustments in NVQ Assessment for candidates with disabilities through NVQ Circular 01/2020. Though many TVET institutions enrol PwDs for some courses, most TVET institutions have no trainers with training on the handling of PwDs. Moreover, the information on training provided to persons with disabilities is scanty and incomplete.

1.4.1.5. Female participation in TVET

According to the TVET information in the Labour Market Information Bulletin - 2019, enrolment and completion of females in TVET courses in 2019 were 43.0% and 43.6%, respectively. Though the 43% participation of females in TVET is not critically low, the participation of females in some courses, particularly in craft-related technical courses,

is critically low.

The issue here is that the majority of the 43% females in TVET are concentrated in a lower number of courses and they seek employment in a lower number of occupations. The end result is lower employability of females and lower female participation in the labour force. Female-dominated occupations are lower than that of males and it is another reason for lower female participation in technical and vocational occupations. Therefore, this issue could be overcome only by expanding the basket of female-friendly TVET courses and occupations that could attract more females for technical and vocational occupations.

There are semi-technical occupations in the interface between technical and non-technical occupations which could be developed to attract females. For example, technical sales assistant jobs in spare parts shops and hardware shops at present are handled by males. These types of occupations could be developed and used to employ females. In the first stage, females should be encouraged to get involved in semi-technical occupations, and this trend may continue to grow to attract females into technical occupations. Some developments in this direction have already been initiated.

1.4.1.6. Introduction of vocational education to the secondary school curriculum

The traditional pathways of school leavers who may not get the opportunity to go into higher education could be explained as listed below:

- About 12% of the 15 - 19 age group may seek direct employment in the labour market. Most of them may engage in low-skilled and short-term jobs, and eventually, some of them end up in the NEET group. According to the Labour Force Survey (2019), the NEET group has accounted for 22% of the youth population.
- Few of them may be fortunate to find formal jobs in the State and private sector.
- Many of them may seek enrolment into the TVET sector, and some of them may get selected for TVET programmes/courses. Out of these groups, some of them give up the programmes/courses due to the mismatches with their interests and expectations and end up in informal jobs.
- Some of the school leavers who seek TVET opportunities may not get selected due to poor performance at school examinations. As NVQ level 3 and 4 courses get sufficient applications from school leavers with good grades, applicants with poor school grades do not get opportunities to enrol in the programmes/courses of their interest. Most TVET institutions do not have NVQ level 1 and 2 courses in popular occupations, and as such many TVET institutions could not accommodate school leavers with poor grades.

This situation is not unique to Sri Lanka and almost all countries face a similar situation. Therefore, many countries have introduced pre-vocational qualifications to qualify school leavers with poor school grades for TVET courses. Sri Lanka school system has implemented many programmes to provide vocational skills to school children from time to time. In 2017, the 13-year Guaranteed Education Programme was introduced to provide 2-year vocational preparation courses or pre-vocational courses for students with poor performance at G.C.E. (O/L). Though students in these programmes acquire some vocational skills, those skills are not certified and the students who complete such programmes are not awarded an appropriate pre-vocational certification/qualification. Therefore, it is recommended to introduce Foundational Vocational Qualification/Pre-vocational Qualification to give recognition to vocational training provided in schools in junior secondary grades and 13-year guaranteed education programme.

1.4.1.7. Building the image of craft occupations and TVET

Despite the existence of severe skills shortages and youth unemployment, there is an issue of lower attraction for some vocational occupations and courses. Several analyses on the issue of skills shortages despite having ample

opportunities for TVET training led to the adoption of a simplified explanation of this phenomenon, and this concept is called 'Skill Equilibrium' analysis (<https://warwick.ac.uk>) which has low and high side dimensions as listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Dimensions of Skills Equilibrium

Dimension of Low Skills Equilibrium	Dimension of High Skills Equilibrium
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low Demand for Skills • Poor Working Conditions • Poor Welfare Measures • Low Wages • Low Supply of Skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Demand for Skills • Good Working Conditions • Good Welfare Measures • Higher Wages • Higher Supply of Skills

Source: Wilson, R., and Hogarth, T. (2003).

As shown in the Table, when the dimensions of equilibrium are not maintained, skills shortages and surpluses will be created. In contrast to the present-day situation, in the 1970s and 1980s, there were no reports on any significant skills shortages in the country. During that period, it was a case of low skills equilibrium. For example, in those days, there was no demand for high workmanship from craftsmen. It was a case of low skills, low working conditions, and wages.

Today, industry and society demand high-quality workmanship and training levels from craftsmen. As such, skills demand has moved to the high side, but the skills equilibrium is broken, as wages and other dimensions have not been improved, creating a skills shortage.

There is a similar article published with the title 'Why There's no such thing as a skills gap' and it articulates the following sentiment; *"When employers say there are no skilled workers, what they're often really saying is that they can't find workers willing to work for the pay they're willing to pay"*²

These concepts are applicable to individual companies as well. Despite skills shortages in the country, some companies do not face that problem because they maintain the skills equilibrium; demand high skills and offer attractive remunerations and welfare measures.

In 2017, His Excellency the President has recognized the skills shortage in the construction industry and requested Secretaries of Ministries responsible for skills development and construction to submit a proposal to address the issue. That report submitted has recommended many measures including giving minimum wages, attractive occupation names, and providing retirement benefits to craft persons. In this policy formulating process, it was proposed to explore the possibility of formulating a pension scheme for craft persons in the informal sector through the Sri Lanka Social Security Board.

1.4.2. Qualification framework, national competency standards and curricula, and industry foresight

1.4.2.1. NVQ Framework

The most noteworthy achievement in the history of TVET in Sri Lanka is the development and adoption of the National Vocational Qualification Framework (NVQF) in 2004. It is a unified qualification system with 7 levels of

2. Gorbis, M. (2016, September 30). Why there's no such thing as a skills gap. <https://www.ge.com/news/reports/theres-no-thing-skills-gap>

qualification – certificate-, diploma-, and degree-level qualifications. Sri Lanka is the first South Asian Country to establish a vocational qualification framework. NVQ Framework has earned public acceptance and has reached a non-reversible level within a short time after launching in 2004. Expectations of the NVQ Framework and its achievements, and gaps are listed below.

- NVQF is an industry-based qualification system developed based on National Competency Standards (NCSs) which specify skills needed to practice in respective occupations in the industry. Therefore, it was expected to award qualifications in accordance with the criteria prescribed in the NVQ Framework by all TVET institutions through the TVET courses offered. But still, there are many institutions and courses both in public and private sectors awarding non-NVQ qualifications.
- At the time of the development of the NVQ Framework, there was no concern about awarding vocational qualifications through general education. However, the school system has started a technology stream of education, and the 13-year guaranteed education programme, and therefore, a need has arisen to design and implement an assessment framework to recognize the vocational skills imparted in schools.
- Though the NVQ framework is in operation for nearly two decades, there is still a tendency for many employers to specify in their job advertisements the required NVQ level along with the institution from which such training is expected. This suggests that there is still a need for improving the acceptance and recognition of NVQF among employers across the country.
- To facilitate the vocationalisation of higher education qualifications, the diploma and degree holders coming out from the higher education institutions who are faced with fewer employment opportunities should be given the opportunity to follow technical and vocational training programmes at NVQ 5 or 6 or 7 levels depending on applicants' choice leading to NVQF-based qualification – top-up qualification – graduate certificate or graduate diploma or degree. This concept is already practiced in many countries including UK, USA, and Australia. (<https://www.aqf.edu.au/aqf-levels>).

The NVQF has been in operation for well over 16 years, clearing many hurdles and challenges with periodic amendments done by the TVEC on the recommendations of the NVQ Steering Committee. Nevertheless, the need has arisen to review and revise NVQ Framework along with the introduction of revised legislation and regulations.

1.4.2.2. National competency standards and competency-based curricula

National Competency Standards (NCSs) are developed occupation-wise, and each set of NCSs specifies the skills, knowledge, attitudes required to practice respective occupations. The currency/unit system of the NVQF that is used to denote the competencies required for a particular occupation is the occupation-specific NCSs, and they are packaged according to jobs in the industry to form qualifications offered under the NVQF. Further, the NVQF has introduced a standardized process to develop the NCSs and the Competency-based Training (CBT) curricula which will ensure all institutions have uniform curricula and thereby consistent course delivery and assessment. This was a great achievement compared to the pre-NVQ era before 2005 when institutions used their own curricula developed, delivered, and assessed based on their experiences and preferences. Nevertheless, the following gaps and issues have been identified in the area of NCSs and CBT curricula development.

- National Competency Standards (NCSs) specify the skills, knowledge, and attitudes required to perform the respective jobs in the industry. Though the competencies in diverse occupations are widely used in the industry, the relevant competency standards specified by the relevant NCSs are not widely adopted by the industrial institutions.
- Many NCSs and CBT curricula developed under NVQ Framework have not been implemented yet by some TVET institutions/centres.

- The process leading to the development of NCSs and CBT curriculum development takes an unreasonably long time.
- Non-availability of NCSs and CBT curricula for skills upgrading courses.
- Absence of awarding a foundational pre-vocational qualification to facilitate school children with poor grades to get enrolled in TVET courses.

Therefore, policy intervention and accompanying regulations are required to address these gaps and issues in NCSs and CBT curricula development process and implementation.

1.4.2.3. Industry foresight for the progressive development of the TVET sector

Ever since the vocational training programmes commenced the 'off-the-job' training centres after the industrial revolution, there have been continuous dialogues over bridging the gaps between demand for and supply of skills. In order to bridge this gap, training centres worldwide have sought industry cooperation to develop curricula and to provide on-the-job training. Training centres in Sri Lanka also have followed the same development approach but without uniform and consistent practices.

Under NVQ Framework, in order to bridge the skills gaps, it was made compulsory to take industry cooperation to conduct the following TVET activities.

- Development of NCSs and CBT curricula with industry cooperation.
- Validation of NCS and CBT curricula by National Industrial Training Advisory Committees (NITACs) which comprise experts of respective industry sectors.
- Provision of 6 months compulsory 'on the Job' training for all trainees in NVQ Level 4 courses.

Forming the NITACs to seek industry collaboration is interpreted as a government-led model, and sometimes the wider industry stakeholders do not agree with some inputs provided by NITACs. Having the same experience with industrial training advisory committees, many countries have formed an industry-led and industry-owned model for industry collaboration in TVET offerings. That is the Industry Sector Skills Councils (ISSCs) which are expected to be proactive and provide industry foresight for the development of TVET programmes. So far, the ISSCs have been established only for 4 industry sectors, and again they are still in the piloting stage.

1.4.3. Training institutions and facilities, types of training, and learning environment

1.4.3.1. Establishing new training centres and improving facilities of existing centres

Among the TVEC registered TVET training centres, about 40% of training centres offer only one programme/course. As a result, the prospective students are not given an opportunity to register in a programme/course of their choice, and this has badly affected the attraction of the youth and industry employees for training. Further, the accessibility into TVET is not well ensured as there is no uniform distribution of TVET centres and programmes/courses across provinces/districts. Many programmes/courses available in Colombo are not available in peripheral districts. Therefore, the spectrum of TVET programmes/courses and their availability across the TVET institutions/centres and provinces/districts need to be further expanded to enable youth in outstations and rural districts to realize their tertiary education and employment aspirations. Another deficiency in this regard is the inadequate emphasis given by TVET providers for the holistic development of trainees by providing opportunities for engaging in extra-curricular activities such as social and cultural, sports, and recreational activities.

1.4.3.2. Use of TVET facilities to provide part-time training for prospective trainees

School leavers from low income families directly go to low-skill, short-term jobs in the service sector that require a minimum level of aptitude and skills. These jobs employ only young people and many such employees tend to leave such jobs and get unemployed when they become adults. Therefore, the TVET centres should offer short courses for youth from low income families who are already in short-term occupations to enable them to do jobs during working hours and participate in training in the afternoons and evenings. This will provide them opportunities to acquire skills for a stable job while engaging in short-term jobs to make earnings for the family.

1.4.3.3. Developing flagship TVET centres for a cluster of small feeder TVET centres

The TVET sector is very heterogeneous in terms of size and resource base. The centres with poor resources and less reputation have not been able to attract students effectively. Therefore, it may be desirable to form networks of resourceful centres and resource-less centres and in this arrangement, students in resource-less centres could move to resourceful centres to complete advanced modules and earn higher-level qualifications.

1.4.3.4. Apprenticeship training

Apprenticeship is a strong training methodology adopted worldwide as it could develop training up to unconscious competency level as the physical/manual actions get automated. Many developed countries use apprenticeship training as their main skills development strategy with many innovations. In Sri Lanka, the NAITA is mandated to implement apprenticeship training programmes. During the past few decades, many countries have modernized apprenticeship training to get the benefits of advancing technologies and digitalization. Therefore, NAITA has an important role to play in strengthening the standards and quality of apprenticeship training in line with the national standards set by the NVQ Framework and global developments of apprenticeship training programmes.

1.4.3.5. Public-private partnerships in TVET training

In the TVET landscape, there are public, private, and industry-based training centres and some of them form partnerships to overcome their weaknesses and create a synergistic effect. The research in this area has highlighted many such examples. Very often these partnerships have been created on initiatives taken by private sector institutions. Many industries may not have come forward for establishing partnerships primarily due to unawareness of these possibilities.

1.4.3.6. Further training and re-training of industry employees

In the Sri Lankan context, empirical evidence indicates that a majority of the workforce in the industrial sector has not had formal pre-employment training and a vast majority of them have skill gaps, especially in the cognitive domains. Therefore, up-skilling of employees is required to bridge the skills gaps thus improving their competencies and productivity. Under the present trend of technological development, obsolescence of some job categories while opening up new job categories is a common phenomenon of labour market dynamism. In the liberal market economies, new businesses are created while some businesses decline and disappear. Under both these phenomena, employees who lose jobs need re-skilling for new and different occupations. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, many enterprises may have been closed down, but many business lines may have propped up. Those new enterprises could absorb a part of the laid-off staff, but these recruits need re-training or re-skilling for the new jobs.

1.4.3.7. Livelihood occupations and 'gig' jobs

It is well known that a large fraction of society is surviving by engaging in livelihood occupations which refers to short-term jobs which provide an income just enough to meet their daily needs. Some of these people do not have the skills required for their livelihood occupations. However, in order to make these people more competent and productive, they need to be provided with opportunities to acquire skills required to engage productively in the livelihood occupations of their preference. Therefore, TVET institutions/centres must operate livelihood training divisions to cater to this category of people living in the locality of respective training institutions/centres.

Another category of emerging employment avenue is working on online platforms without an explicit contract for long-term employment, and these jobs are called 'gig' jobs. These jobs are flexible, temporary, or freelance jobs, often involving or connecting with clients or customers through an online platform. Therefore, the 'gig' economy can benefit workers, businesses, and consumers by providing their labour and services in more adaptable to the needs of the emerging markets and circumstances. Therefore, it is necessary to identify skills needs and other constraints in livelihood occupations and 'gig' jobs and support those who are engaged in such occupations to develop their skill profiles as there is a vulnerability in these types of jobs.

1.4.3.8. Entrepreneurship development in vocational training

It is very conceivable that most of the youth have some interest to start their own businesses. But many do not realize their dream as they do not get the required encouragement and support to make the first initiative. Further, it is very conceivable that a person with trade skills has a lower risk to start a business in his/her trained trades, and therefore, many TVET certificate/diploma holders appear to make their initiatives to start business ventures.

Recognizing the importance of entrepreneurship development (ED) in TVET, the ADB-assisted Skills Development Project (SDP) from 1998 to 2006 had introduced ED as a project component. The SDP developed an ED Training Manual and trained a large number of TVET staff as ED trainers. In parallel, the SDP established a revolving fund to provide start-up investment loans at a subsidized interest rate to TVET certificate/diploma holders after completing the ED training.

1.4.3.9. Skilling for foreign employment

Foreign Employment is an important structural feature of the employment market in Sri Lanka. The major issue with foreign employment is that departures for foreign employment are much less than vacancies received for most occupations. There may be many reasons for low departures, but one of the major reasons is the unavailability of sufficiently qualified and competent people for job categories requested by foreign employers.

The VET Plan for Electrical and Electronics Sector – 2020 analysed the foreign employment opportunities in electrical and electronic industries and occupations and found that 80% of foreign labour market vacancies and 80% of departures are in 20% of occupations. Therefore, if this 20% of occupations are identified, and training programmes are developed to meet the skills needs of foreign employment, 80% of foreign employment vacancies could be filled.

1.4.4. Quality assurance in technical and vocational education and training

1.4.4.1. Quality assurance system in TVET

Recognizing the importance of quality in TVET, the TVEC has implemented a Quality Assurance (QA) mechanism for the TVET sector. In this QA mechanism, quality is expected to be achieved through implementing three regulatory tools; i) registration of training institutions, ii) accreditation of courses, and iii) installation of a quality management system (TMS) in TVET institutions. These regulatory processes should be clearly formulated, unambiguous, and efficiently executed for training institutes to comply with the requirements without undue and excessive efforts and time.

1.4.4.2. Issues related to quality assurance in TVET

Though the quality assurance system is well placed and piloted, it is faced with the following gaps and issues.

- There are many training centres and courses operating with expired registration and accreditation.
- QMS has been installed only in 250 training centres.
- Skills Competitions which is considered as important tool in quality enhancement were held but not on a regular basis even though it is listed as a mandatory function in TVE Act No 20 of 1990.

Therefore, there is a need for revisiting the existing QA processes and guidelines to make them simpler to follow and implement.

1.4.4.3. Innovations for quality improvements

As the public expects excellence in the performance of TVT employees beyond the standard level of quality, the TVEC has explored further innovation in quality improvements by designing and introducing the following quality enhancement programmes:

- Design and introduction of Quality Management System (QMS) for all TVET institutions,
- Design and conduct training programmes to promote quality culture in the TVET sector,
- Design and conduct of Quality Improvement System (QIS) with the award of step-by-step star certifications, and
- Introduction of Skills Competition programmes among qualification holders and training centres for excellence awards.

1.4.4.4. Quality management system and quality improvement system

With the development of the NVQ Framework, the TVEC introduced a Quality Management System (QMS) with internal and external quality audits to training centres. QMS has been installed in about 250 training centres but it demanded further innovations with simplification. Therefore, TVEC with the assistance of foreign consultants developed different quality concepts and introduced a quality culture training programme for the staff and Quality Improvement System (QIS) with star certification and this initiative has been launched with the tagline 'Quality is Fun'.

1.4.4.5. Competition for expertise and excellence

Registration, Accreditation, QMS, and QIS explained above aim to achieve quality in training centres and hence their quality of training provisions. In parallel, the Ministry and TVEC introduced competitions among training centres to motivate the training centres to achieve desired standards and quality. These programmes are well geared to meet public aspirations as the public expects expert performance from NVQ holders and excellent performance from training centres.

1.4.4.6. Skills competition among the TVET certificate holders

Vocational training programmes are developed and conducted to provide competencies required for employment. Here, competency means the ability to meet the requirements of relevant standards, but when the public wants technical services, they search for experts in the trade. For example, the public always goes to expert vehicle mechanics or expert hairdressers. This applies to other technical and vocational areas too. Therefore, competent people should be supported to acquire and develop expertise fast. If skills competitions are held annually with national, provincial, and district competitions, a culture of competitions will emerge and many skilled people will endeavour to reach the desired proficiency.

1.4.4.7. Competition for excellence among the TVET training centres

Many quality measures have been introduced to training centres to achieve expected performance. These quality measures should be ordinary or routine practices in a training centre, and the centres become excellent when they perform those ordinary and routine work extraordinarily well. In 2019, in line with the International Youth Skills Day celebrations, the Ministry and TVEC introduced a competition to identify training centres with excellence and it has continued in 2021 too.

1.4.5. Human resources development and management

1.4.5.1. Deficiencies in the current human resource development and management practices

The TVET Institutions train people to enable them to find employment in the industry. Therefore, staff of TVET Institutions should have a higher level of competencies than those employees in the industry. But the prevailing situation is completely the opposite due to the following deficiencies and gaps.

- As TVET staff has been placed on comparatively lower salary scales than those in the industry, it is difficult to recruit and retain competent staff and keep them motivated.
- Most TVET Institutions do not have sufficient research and MIS capacity.
- All leading TVET institutions have a relatively high vacancy ratio (*i.e. vacancies/cadre ratio*) which runs above 25% most of the time.

To offset the low salary issue, the Ministry with the ADB and World Bank-assisted Skills Sector Development Programme (SSDP) has introduced a performance-based incentive scheme for trainers and academic staff. A recent study has revealed that this incentive scheme has made an immense contribution to improving performance but it is not sufficient to arrest the high turnover of the academic and training staff.

1.4.5.2. *Trainer training system – needs and shortcomings*

TVET trainers have a challenging role that needs competencies in the following areas;

- Updated technical knowledge in his/her subject area in line with advancing technologies,
- Skills in preparation of training material and lesson plans,
- Pedagogical skills with updated knowledge in training and education technology/science,
- Digital readiness to explore new skills and knowledge and to facilitate online delivery of training,
- Quality assurance with course accreditation and Quality Management System, and
- Skills in communication, proficiency in the mother tongue and English language, and professionalism.

At the recruitment of trainers, the applicants do not have qualifications reflecting all these skills or trainer qualifications. Therefore, recruitment of trainers is done based on the qualifications relevant to technical skills and aptitude for other skills. Therefore, they should be given post-recruitment training opportunities for professional development and acquisition of required skills.

1.4.6. **Financing of technical and vocational education and training**

The low social recognition and poor outlook of the TVET centres are major barriers to attracting school leavers to the TVET system. One of the reasons for the current situation is the low investments in TVET sector development as it has been given relatively less priority compared to other sectors of education since independence.

However, to supplement the limited government funding, TVET centres have the potential to generate some income by offering fee-paying, part-time programmes/courses to persons already employed, and also providing technical services to the industry and public at a fee. Another possibility is imposing a CESS (*training levy charged from the industry*). Though, section 83 of the TVE Act No. 20 of 1990 has specified a Training CESS, no attempt has yet been made to implement it. Many countries use payroll levies as a mechanism to finance TVET, and as such, it is necessary for the TVET institutions/centres to explore and use alternative funding mechanisms to supplement low budgetary allocations from the Treasury.

1.4.7. **Regulation, and governance and management**

1.4.7.1. *Legal framework governing TVET sector*

The legislative enactments passed by the Parliament and the Service Minutes relevant to TVET Institutions have provided the legal and institutional framework required to regulate and govern the TVET sector. Nonetheless, all these Acts and Services Minutes are in need of review and updating.

1.4.7.2. *Issues relating to regulation and governance of the TVET sector*

The Acts and Ordinances pertaining to TVET are more than 20 years old, and the sector has progressed exponentially over the past two decades and faced with many challenges and issues. As such, there is a need for reviewing the existing Acts and Ordinances and making appropriate amendments for such enactments to empower the TVEC and other TVET agencies to regulate and govern the TVET sector institutions/centres more effectively and efficiently.

1.4.8. Data and information, and research

1.4.8.1. Labour market and training information

The planning process for the TVET sector is hampered by not having regular labour market information (LMI) and data and statistics on national, regional, and sectoral skills needs. Moreover, no regular studies were conducted to track performances and competencies achieved by the TVET trainees/certificate and diploma holders and thus, it is not possible to evaluate the performance of TVET institutions/centres and TVET certificate holders directly. Therefore, it is necessary to have an LMIS to produce regular, timely, and relevant labour market information to plan the training programmes/courses to meet the needs of a wide variety of users of both public and private sectors.

1.4.8.2. Research in TVET

In many countries, a strong research arm of the TVET sector propels it to reach higher profile and performance levels. Having identified the need for research, all legislative Acts relevant to the TVET sector have included research as one of the mandatory functions of institutions. With the previous donor-funded project assistance, the TVEC has established a research cell drawing resource personnel from leading TVET institutions and got a budget line from the Treasury to fund the research proposals submitted by trainers in different TVET institutions. To complement these efforts, the TVEC held a mini-research convention annually in the early days. Though the research programmes are still operated, the research conventions are not held on a regular basis.

1.5. Conclusion

The TVET sector has an indispensable role in providing training in technical and vocational occupations to enable people of the country to realize their employment aspirations, for the industry to have a skilled workforce, and for the country to prosper in the manufacturing, industrial, and service sectors. As highlighted in the status review, the TVET sector is confronted with many issues related to access, qualification framework, training delivery and physical resources, quality assurance, human resources, financing, governance and management, information management, and research. Accordingly, 24 policies with accompanying recommended strategic activities addressing the issues and gaps identified are formulated and presented herewith. We earnestly hope that the Ministry, the TVEC, and the relevant TVET institutions will give due consideration to the policy proposals and recommended strategies detailed in this document in designing and implementing sector-specific development activities.

2. POLICY PROPOSALS AND RECOMMENDED STRATEGIC ACTIVITIES

Having considered the issues highlighted in the Status Review, the policies and recommended strategic activities relevant to sector-specific 8 core areas and accompanying directive principles are formulated in accordance with the guidelines elaborated in Part III of the NEPF (2020-2030).

The 8 core areas include: i) Access and Enrolment; ii) Qualification Framework, National Competency Standards, and Curricula; iii) Training Facilities and Learning Environment; iv) Quality Assurance in Technical and Vocational Education and Training; v) Human Resources Development and Management; vi) Financing of Technical and Vocational Education and Training; vii) Regulation, and Governance and Management; and viii) Information Management and Research are detailed below.

This approach is taken, as stated previously, to ensure the policy planning process gives comprehensive coverage across all core areas and elements while giving due consideration to issues and gaps highlighted in the Status Review that impede the progressive developments of the TVET sector.

Core Area – TVET 1: Access and Enrolment

Directive Principles

- DP 1: The State assures the accessibility of all youth and adults to technical and vocational education and training irrespective of school performances, gender, ethnicity, social status, disability, geographical locations, and any other differences.
- DP 2: The State is committed to providing incentives to attract and retain potential youth for training in technical and vocational education.
- DP 3: The State is committed to inspiring prospective youths and adults to join technical and vocational education and training by implementing an attractive minimum wage policy and offering social security benefits for skilled employees both in the formal and informal sectors.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-TVET 1.1: Prospective trainees for TVET programmes should be reached through resourceful career guidance and counselling programmes

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The National Career Guidance Steering Committee (NCGSC) of the TVEC shall function as a national level catalytic unit to liaise with leading the TVET institutions, and the Ministry of Education and Provincial Departments of Educations to reach out to the wider group of the target groups (*school children, school dropouts, school leavers and those who are in the NEET group*) to educate them about training opportunities in TVET and career prospects for TVET certificate and diploma holders.
- The NCGSC shall review available career guidance material and tools (*e.g. career interest test*) and develop a set of standardized career guidance materials in collaboration with career guidance arms of TVET institutions, Ministry of Education and Provincial Departments of Education, Department of Manpower Planning and Employment, and career guidance units of Provincial Councils.
- The NCGSC shall work in collaboration with the Information System Division (ISD) of the TVEC and ensure that the updated information on TVET programmes, career opportunities for different NVQ qualifiers is made available on a regular basis to all career guidance arms of TVET institutions, Ministry of Education and Provincial Departments of Education, Department of Manpower Planning and Employment, and career guidance units of Provincial Councils and schools in the general education system.
- All leading TVET institutions and other career guidance service providers (*Ministry of Education and Provincial Departments of Education, Department of Manpower Planning and Employment, and career guidance unit of provincial councils*) shall take steps to revamp and expand the existing career guidance network by providing required human and physical resources, and career guidance materials.
- The NCGSC shall liaise with the Ministry of Education and Provincial Departments Education to promote the establishment of mechanisms such as career explores clubs in schools to facilitate long-term deliberation on choosing a career or employment-linked training programmes/courses by school children.

- The NCGSC of the TVEC should catalyse the establishment of an ICT-enabled career information system for job placements with links to the current job placement Websites.
- The TVEC in cooperation with TVET institutions and the NEC shall conduct research for analysing labour market dynamics to predict future trends in technical and vocational jobs and occupational roles, and analyse and report labour market trends in the local and foreign employment-related labour markets, and the reasons for high dropout rates of trainees from the TVET programmes/courses.
- Career Guidance Units of TVET institutions/centres are required to provide counselling services to TVET trainees to minimize dropouts and also encourage potential dropouts to continue the same or different programmes.

Policy-TVET 1.2:

Provide financial and logistical support to attract prospective TVET trainees

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The TVEC in cooperation with leading TVET institutions shall prepare and issue the eligibility criteria for trainee allowance payment, amount, and selection process.
- The Ministry and all TVET institutions must ensure timely payment of approved allowances to trainees.
- National level TVET institutions which accommodate trainees from all regions of the country shall take steps to provide adequate accommodation facilities for needy trainees.
- All leading TVET institutions shall work collectively to explore the possibilities to obtain training allowance for trainees from industrial enterprises during their apprenticeship training and on-the-job training periods.

Policy-TVET 1.3:

All TVET institutions shall facilitate inclusive TVET programmes for vulnerable people

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The TVEC shall set up a Steering Committee on Inclusive TVET education to promote TVET institutions to open up TVET programmes/ courses for persons with disabilities (PwDs).
- The TVEC shall take steps to transform TVET programmes/courses conducted for PwDs by the Department of Social Services and non-governmental organizations into the NVQF with appropriate adjustments.
- The TVET institutions shall facilitate training centres to have staff trained for handling students with different types of disabilities who could work as shadow trainers³ for students with disabilities.
- The TVET institutions must train career guidance officers to identify PwDs and guide and direct them to appropriate courses.

3. *Shadow trainer assists the person with disabilities to do the homework and fill the gap after the formal learning session.*

- The TVEC must monitor and ensure the implementation of reasonable adjustments in the NVQ assessment tools for application on the candidates with disabilities as introduced by the NVQ Circular 01/2020⁴.
- The TVEC shall arrange specialized training programmes for trainers and assessors for serving PwDs.
- The TVEC while assessing training centres for registration must monitor the compliance with the facilities prescribed to cater for the PwDs.
- The Management Information Systems of the respective TVET institutions must facilitate the compilation of enrolment and other relevant information on PwDs in the TVET system.

Policy-TVET 1.4: Promote female participation in TVET programmes

Recommended Strategic Activities

- All TVET institutions must promote the enrolment of females in all technical and vocational programmes/courses.
- The TVEC shall promote the expansion of TVET programmes/courses and occupations that have greater affinity by female trainees with appropriate NCSs, CBT curricula, and training courses.
- The Ministry and the TVEC must include a component in the future donor-funded development projects to assist training centres and private enterprises which provide on-the-job training to develop training centre facilities and common amenities required for females.
- The TVEC and the TVET institutions shall provide skills upgrading and skill diversification courses targeting particularly females to widen their career options.

Policy-TVET 1.5: The TVET institutions must recognize pre-vocational achievements/qualifications earned from general education as entry qualifications into programmes/courses and extend assistance in conducting vocational education in schools

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The TVEC in liaison with the MoE and Provincial Departments of Education shall design and introduce an appropriate mechanism to recognize under the NVQ framework the technical and vocational knowledge and skills imparted under the 13-year guaranteed education programme.
- The TVET institutions shall take steps to provide services of career guidance officers, trainers, and training centre facilities to schools that offer technical and vocational education and training – i.e. conventional vocational training programmes, 13-year guaranteed education programme, and G.C.E. (A/L) Technology stream of education.
- The TVET institutions shall take steps to enrol students coming out from the 13-year guaranteed education programme into relevant training courses, irrespective of the performance at the G.C.E. (O/L) examination.

4. *Tertiary and Vocational Educational Commission. (2020). NVQ Circular No. 01/2020: Reasonable adjustments in NVQ assessment for candidates with disabilities.*

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The TVEC shall work with the Wage Board of the Department of Labour to facilitate the introduction of an NVQ-based wage structure with attractive minimum wages for different occupational categories.
- The TVEC shall work with the Department of Labour to take steps to facilitate the implementation of EPF and ETF payment policy for informal sector workers and freelance workers.
- All TVET institutions shall take steps to refurbish existing dilapidated physical facilities and give a facelift to buildings of training centres to improve the image of the places and to create an appealing for the prospective youth.
- All TVET institutions shall take steps to train and develop trainers as mentors, counsellors, and role models so that the trainees could seek advice, guidance, and encouragement, and model themselves by emulating their trainers.
- The TVET institution and centres together with the industries should modernize 3D occupations (*i.e. Dirty, Difficult, and Dangerous occupations*) by integrating with technologies, improving health and safety standards, and also by improving working conditions provided for employees of such occupations.
- The TVET curriculum developers (*i.e. TVEC, NAITA, and UoVT*) shall introduce modules on entrepreneurship, business accounting, and prudent use of earned income so as to ensure success in their careers and lives, and to make trainees aware of social security systems such as EPF, ETF, and pension scheme of Sri Lanka Social Security Board.
- The TVEC together with Industry Sector Skills Councils (ISSC) shall take steps to promote the social image of practicing craft persons.

Core Area – TVET 2: Qualification Framework, National Competency Standards and Curricula

Directive Principles

- DP 1: The TVEC must execute its full mandate in regulating the quality and relevance and the standards of technical and vocational education and training through the strict implementation of the National Vocational Qualification Framework and all the elements of the quality assurance system.
- DP 2: All TVET institutions (*both public and private*) are required to comply with National Vocational Qualification Framework and quality assurance system, and take steps to adopt the National Competency Standards and competency-based training curricula and assessments, and seek course accreditation from the TVEC.
- DP 3: The Industry Sector Skills Councils are expected to provide the direction and guidance with industry foresight on the skills development process to the TVET institutions.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-TVET 2.1: Review and revise the National Vocational Qualification Framework and make provisions to benchmark it against the international standards and best practices

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The TVEC shall take steps to review the NVQF to add the following features;
 - Accommodate Foundational Vocational/Pre-vocational Level Qualification to recognize achievements in vocational knowledge and skills of school children who have followed the 13-year guaranteed education programme,
 - Facilitate offering higher-level modular certificate courses at NVQ levels 5, 6, and 7, and
 - Facilitate offering higher-level programmes/courses leading to the graduate certificate- and graduate diploma-level qualifications beyond level 7 for graduates coming out from universities and higher education institutions who have faced low employability.
- The TVEC shall take steps to do the mapping of NVQF with the regional or global qualification frameworks that are widely accepted in regions where Sri Lankans seek foreign employment and higher education opportunities, in order to seek recognition for the qualifications granted locally under the NVQF.
- The TVEC in liaison with the Ministry of Public Administration, Wage Boards of the Labour Department, and the Foreign Employment Bureau shall promote NVQ-based recruitments into the public sector, private sector, and for foreign employment.
- The TVEC shall seek recognition for qualifications offered under the NVQF for higher education opportunities in local and global higher education systems.
- The TVEC shall explore the application of competency-based training and assessments for different modes of technical and vocational education and training while being sensitive to the cost of training and assessments.
- The ISSCs shall facilitate the engagement of industry representatives in institution-based assessments at least at 50% level.

Policy-TVET 2.2: Review the National Competency Standards and Competency-based Training Curricula development processes periodically to reflect skills demanded in the industry, and effective learning and training process

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The TVEC and the NAITA together shall review the methodology of development of NCSs and CBT curricula in cooperation with the industry to reflect those competencies that are in use, and are of high demand in the industry.
- The TVEC and UoVT together shall review the methodology of development of NCSs and CBT curricula to ensure that the competencies specified in relevant NCSs are achieved through the prescribed

compulsory modules with the provision of optional modules to cater for regional variations in relevant competencies.

- The TVEC, NAITA, and UoVT together shall review and improve institutional capacities, human and training resources, and procedures to complete the development of NCSs and CBT curricula within a reasonable time frame.
- The TVEC shall develop a system including industry and district TVET fora to identify priority occupations and industry/technology sectors with a demand for skills to develop NCSs and CBT curricula.
- The TVEC shall implement a rational mix of NVQ levels 1 - 4, 5, and 6 and 7, NCSs, and CBT curricula to facilitate qualification progression.
- The TVEC, NAITA, and other developers of NCSs and CBT curricula shall take steps to ensure the implementation of newly developed NCSs and CBT curricula by the respective training institutions/centres into the programmes/courses offered by them.
- The TVEC and NAITA shall introduce standalone course units and modules to facilitate skills upgrading and career development in respective occupations.
- The TVEC shall conduct research and innovation on the application of NVQF to explore alternative applications of technical and vocational competencies.
- The TVEC and NAITA together with the Foreign Employment Bureau shall take steps to incorporate skills needs for foreign employment in relevant NCSs and CBT curricula.

Policy-TVET 2.3:

The TVET institutions must bring industry foresight into the design and development and delivery of technical and vocational training programmes

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The Ministry and TVEC shall jointly review the existing industry collaboration models and decide on appropriate reforms and financing models for the sustainability of TVET - industry collaborations.
- The TVEC and TVET institutions shall explore industry collaboration through the ISSCs and also through the National Industrial Training Advisory Committees (NITACs) which play complementary roles to get the directions and guidance for TVET development.
- The ISSCs should continue to provide inputs to TVEC, NAITA, and other TVET agencies to develop NCSs, CBT curricula, and assessment tools.
- The ISSCs shall extend cooperation to TVET institutions to conduct assessments, facilitate apprenticeships and on-the-job training (OJT) in industries with advanced technologies, and in industry trend analyses, preparation of industry-related career guidance tools, and in nominating members to NITACs.

Core Area – TVET 3: Training Institutions and Facilities, Learners and Learning Environment

Directive Principles

- DP 1: The TVET institutions are expected to establish training facilities with a uniform course mix with uniform geographical distribution and facilitate all social groups to have access to TVET programmes of their choice.
- DP 2: The NAITA is expected to explore the full potential of apprenticeship training with a wider number of occupations and enterprises with advanced technologies.
- DP 3: The TVET institutions are expected to facilitate the acquisition of skills by prospective trainees for up-skilling with advanced technologies, entrepreneurship, and for foreign employment and livelihood occupations.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-TVET 3.1: Rationalize and strengthen the TVET centre network to enhance access, broad-base training provisions, and enhance the social image to attract potential trainees

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The Ministry with all TVET institutions shall review the existing network of TVET centres and introduce reforms to ensure rational distribution of training centres and courses in all geographical locations to facilitate uniform course mix in each district with adequate human and physical resources including the provisions to deliver them in languages that are in demand.
- All TVET Institutions should improve the social image of training centres by improving and maintaining physical resources (*i.e. well-maintained buildings and pleasing surroundings, name boards, billboards, etc.*), training resources (*i.e. training workshops, laboratories, IT facilities, library, etc.*), and common amenities (*i.e. study areas and restrooms with changing facilities, recreation facilities, etc.*) to make a positive impression on the public and attract potential trainees.
- All TVET institutions shall take steps to modernize existing training programmes/courses, to make them exciting to the trainees and attractive to potential youth.
- All TVET institutions shall take steps to provide course mixes covering a wider number of trades/occupations to enable youth to select courses according to their choices including the provisions of foundation courses/programmes, and NVQ level 1 and 2 courses, particularly to attract school leavers with poor grades at the G.C.E. (O/L) examination.
- All TVET centres shall conduct regular training needs assessments surveys by covering wider stakeholder groups – industry employees, community involved with livelihood occupations, those involved or aspiring to join overseas employment markets, etc., and design and offer short-courses/programmes offered on part-time and fee levying basis to cater for the needs identified.

- All TVET centres shall establish facilities for both the co-curricular and extra-curricular activities to promote and facilitate the holistic development of trainees.
- All TVET Institutions, particularly the flagship institutions (*such as CGTTI, Colleges of Technologies, and other national institutes*) shall cooperate with smaller centres/feeder centres to establish mutually beneficial and synergistic linkages, and also to promote the progression of TVET trainees from smaller centres to gain entry into reputed national institutes/centres to earn higher-level national vocational qualification under the NVQF.
- The TVEC shall take steps to strengthen the existing grant schemes offered to private and NGO training centres and facilitate commercial banks to provide loans with subsidized interest rates for private training providers/centres for expansion and strengthening of training facilities.
- The TVEC shall formulate and issue regulatory directives, making it compulsory for any institution/person to seek prior approval from the TVEC for setting up new training centres.

Policy-TVET 3.2:

Review and expand apprenticeship training programmes

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The NAITA shall take steps to expand apprenticeship-based training for a wider range of occupations available in the labour market in compliance with the NVQ Framework.
- The NAITA shall take steps to explore and use modern methods of workplace learning with relevant theory and practice on par with the international standards and benchmarks.
- The NAITA shall take steps to get the cooperation of large-scale industries including those that are operated through the BOI and Export Processing Zones to expand apprenticeship training provided to the TVET trainees, particularly in industries that employ advanced technologies.
- The NAITA shall take steps to strengthen inter-enterprise cooperation (*between large and medium scale enterprises*) to facilitate quality apprentice training in all courses/modules of occupations. When inter-enterprise cooperation is not possible, apprenticeship should be supported by supplementary training inputs provided by instructors with appropriate quality assurance elements.
- The NAITA shall take steps to review situational apprenticeship training provisions to identify emerging occupations in the industry.
- The NAITA shall take steps to enrol employees in informal jobs (*short-term occupations*) in the formal sector for apprenticeship training programmes and facilitate them to earn an appropriate vocational qualification certificate upon completion of such training under the NVQF.
- The NAITA is required to encourage industries to provide a training allowance to trainees who undergo apprenticeship training in their industrial establishments.

Policy-TVET 3.3: Promote public-private training centre partnerships to explore the synergistic effect on training capacity and industry relevance

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The TVEC and State TVET institutions shall explore and establish public-private training centre partnerships to deliver programmes/courses that cater to the needs of the industry in terms of highly skilled human resources and advanced technological inputs.
- The TVEC, TVET institutions, and ISSCs collectively shall take steps to explore the partnership between TVET centres and industry to deliver training in specialized areas with advanced technology and to explore opportunities in innovative training modes.
- The Ministry and TVEC shall consider provisions of projects and donor funding for start-up capital to encourage partnerships between TVET institutions and industry partners backed by feasibility studies and risk analyses.
- The TVEC should establish collaborations with local and overseas TVET agencies in order to build the capacities of TVET institutions and TVET teachers/trainers.

Policy-TVET 3.4: The TVET institutions and centres besides providing pre-employment training for youth, shall provide further training and re-training for industry employees

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The TVEC, NAITA, and other institutions with delegated authority for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) mode of assessment shall expand NVQ certification for industry employees who do not possess formal training/certification.
- The TVET institutions shall provide technical assistance to the industry for the promotion of firm-based training and skill upgrading courses for industry employees with a Record of Achievement Certificate (RoA) under the NVQF.
- The TVET institutions shall develop and conduct advanced skills modules in the occupations which are in demand in foreign employment markets.
- The TVEC and TVET institutions shall take steps to develop learning modules to deliver through open and distance modes of training and make them available to the public through social media channels.
- The Ministry and TVEC shall consider offering subsidies or concessions for further training of industry employees when the formulation of new skills development projects.
- The TVEC and ISSCs shall explore the funding from the Employee Trust Fund (ETF) for skills upgrading of industry employees who contribute to ETF.
- The TVEC and TVET institutions shall facilitate re-training of industry employees who have lost their jobs due to any reason.

Policy-TVET 3.5: All TVET institutions and centres must provide livelihood training skills for nearby communities to enable them to engage in livelihood work effectively

Recommended Strategic Activities

- All TVET institutions and centres shall take steps to establish a separate section/unit to organize programmes/courses in cooperation with public and private industry lead bodies to cater to the skills needs of the community who are engaged in livelihood occupations, and 'gig' job holders for the effective performance of their jobs.
- The TVEC and TVET institutions shall take steps to undertake research to explore the scope and training needs of livelihood and 'gig' occupations.

Policy-TVET 3.6: All TVET institutions and centres must promote entrepreneurship among TVET trainees and TVET certificate and diploma holders

Recommended Strategic Activities

- All TVET institutions shall offer module/s to all TVET trainees to create awareness on entrepreneurship, and this provision should be made a pre-requisite for registration of training centres by the TVEC.
- The TVET institutions under the guidance of the Ministry, and the TVEC shall develop occupation-specific entrepreneurship development (ED) programmes and deliver them to certificate holders in respective occupations.
- The Ministry shall take steps to monitor the implementation of the Self-employment Promotional Initiative (SEPI) loan scheme with periodic revision of regulations and to make sure availability of funds in the SEPI revolving fund to disperse loans.
- The TVET institutions shall establish an ED promotion unit to offer advisory services to the small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs) established by the TVET passed outs.
- The TVEC shall conduct periodic studies to evaluate the progress and weaknesses of ED programmes and propose actions to mitigate weaknesses and to propagate best practices.

Policy-TVET 3.7: Skills needs for foreign employment markets must be included in courses delivered under the NVQ framework and bridge the skills gaps of existing qualification holders to make them eligible for foreign employment

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The TVEC shall link with qualification authorities of labour destination countries and map the NVQF with similar qualification frameworks of those countries.
- The TVEC and Foreign Employment Bureau shall take steps to identify key occupations covering a wider

range of vacancies in foreign employment markets, and regularly update the list prepared to keep abreast with the changing overseas labour demand patterns.

- Based on the updated overseas labour market demand reports, the TVEC together with NAITA and other key stakeholders shall take steps to regularly revise the NCSs and CBT curricula to include the skills needs for foreign employment markets.
- The TVEC, DTET, NAITA, Foreign Employment Bureau, and TVET institutions collectively shall take steps to develop training modules on advanced skills for foreign employment based on the NCSs and CBT curricula prepared by the TVEC and NAITA to cater for the skills needs for foreign employment markets.
- The TVEC together with the DTET, UoVT and Foreign Employment Bureau shall take steps to identify the Colleges of Technologies/Technical Colleges that have the capacity to undertake skills upgrading/re-training programmes for TVET Certificate and Diploma holders to impart advanced knowledge and skills required for foreign employment and commence the provision of training for those who aspire to seek the overseas employment opportunities.

Core Area – TVET 4: Quality Assurance in Technical and Vocational Education and Training

Directive Principles

- DP 1: All TVET institutions and training programmes irrespective of the type of ownership should operate only with valid registration and quality assurance certification.
- DP 2: Quality assurance programmes should be made easy to implement by making them very rational and persuasive, and easy for TVET institutions to understand and comply with.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-TVET 4.1: Quality Assurance processes must ensure quality in design and development, delivery, and assessment of training programmes in TVET

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The TVEC shall take steps to review current quality assurance tools; registration of training centres, pre-registration approval, accreditation of courses, Quality Management System (QMS), and Quality Improvement System (QIS) and make them persuasive and simplified but without compromising their effectiveness.
- The TVEC and the UoVT shall take steps to review and revise the training programme aimed at promoting the institutionalization of quality culture in TVET institutions/centres and internalizing quality concepts among trainers/instructors and managers of both the public and private sectors and deliver them to intended target groups.
- The Ministry and TVEC shall take steps to hold skills competitions and excellence awards among TVET staff and training centres regularly to promote expertise among competent persons and the quality and standards of TVET training centres.

- The TVEC shall take steps to promote public awareness on the importance of quality of training institutions/centres and their programmes, so as to encourage the public to demand quality educational services from TVET training institutions/centres.

Core Area – TVET 5: Human Resources Development and Management

Directive Principles

- DP 1: The technical and vocational education and training system should be manned and fostered by well-qualified and adequately remunerated managerial and teaching staff.
- DP 2: The technical and vocational education and training staff must remain abreast with continuing advances in technology and technical and vocational education.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-TVET 5.1: Review and revise human resource development and management system to ensure the availability of competent and motivated staff at all levels of the TVET system

Recommended Strategic Activities

- All TVET institutions shall have cadre profiles/positions with the appropriate mix of permanent, contractual, and visiting staff.
- The Ministry in consultation with TVET institutions shall review the existing salary structures and schemes of recruitment, and propose attractive salary structures for different categories of TVET employees and a unified scheme of recruitment applicable to all types of TVET institutions to attract and retain the best talent.
- All TVET institutions shall take steps to adopt merit-based promotional schemes supported by an effective staff appraisal system.
- The UoVT shall take steps to design and offer suitable post-graduate study programmes for academic and academic support and managerial staff in the TVET system.
- All TVET institutions should conduct a periodic human resource audit to identify staff with excellent performance and best practices and take steps to propagate such best practices across all TVET institutions.
- All TVET institutions shall take steps to internalize relevant international best practices in human resource management.

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The Ministry, TVEC, and UoVT should take action to develop a central dedicated trainer training institution with accommodation facilities for participants with a network of staff training centres across the country. This institution should provide training in the following area but not limited to;
 - Pedagogical training and teaching competencies considering changing teaching, training, and learning practices,
 - Skills development programmes on par with technological advancements and changing work practices in the industry, and aimed at the introduction of TVET staff to modern facilities and technologies adopted by the industry,
 - Application of ICT-based teaching and training tools to develop and deliver courses, and
 - Communication skills and English Language skills.
- The TVEC and UoVT shall periodically review and revise the trainer qualification (*i.e. NVQ Level 5 for training and assessment and above*) by benchmarking them against the international best practices and facilitating all trainers to have NVQ Level 5 trainer and assessor qualification or higher level.
- The TVEC shall issue circular instructions making it compulsory for all recruits into the academic staff to undergo induction programmes to ensure a smooth transition into their workplace and to create an understanding of their roles and responsibilities, and workplace norms and rules and regulations.
- The UoVT and TVEC shall take steps to establish linkages with national and international higher education institutions to provide opportunities to TVET staff for further professional development.
- The TVEC together with TVET institutions shall take steps to introduce a scheme to provide periodic industry attachment to trainers and instructors to stay abreast with recent advances in technology.
- The TVET institutions shall take steps to establish a system to employ relief trainers/instructors to conduct classes when the regular trainers take short-term and long-term leave.
- The TVEC together with TVET institutions shall develop and offer an online learning portal for skills upgrading of all TVET staff.

Core Area – TVET 6: Financing of Technical and Vocational Education

Directive Principles

- DP 1: The State assumes the responsibility for providing adequate funding for technical and vocational education and training.
- DP 2: The technical and vocational training institutions must explore the potential avenues for income generation to complement the Treasury allocations.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-TVET 6.1: Ensure provision of adequate funding for the State TVET system while providing a conducive environment for private investment into the TVET sector

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The Ministry shall take steps to enhance the annual Treasury allocation to meet the recurrent and capital expenses for facility maintenance and support the further development and advancement of the TVET system.
- The TVEC shall assess Return of Investment (RoI) including inward remittances from foreign employment of NVQ certificate holders and per students cost to justify the enhanced funding for the TVET sector from the Treasury.
- The Ministry and the TVEC shall ensure that donor funds are disbursed for needy reforms of the TVET sector decided based on the Return on Investment (ROI) and risk analyses.
- The TVET institutions shall take steps to ensure investment decisions are made based on effectiveness and efficiency criteria to ensure the rational use of the allocated funds.
- The TVEC and TVET institutions shall take steps to do effective project planning and prepare realistic estimates and budgets for public and donor funding.
- The Ministry and the TVEC shall take steps to provide project-based funding to develop private and industry-based TVET institutions in subject areas/fields where public TVET institutions are not performing effectively.
- The TVEC shall negotiate with the State and commercial banks to facilitate loans scheme for private TVET institutions at subsidized interest rates.

Policy-TVET 6.2: All TVET institutions must be facilitated to engage in income-generating activities to complement the Treasury allocations

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The Ministry and the TVEC in consultation with the Treasury shall develop and issue the administrative circular instructions granting the provisions to engage in income-generating activities, and to retain the generated funds for ploughing back as working capital, and for the incentive payment for the staff.
- The TVEC and TVET institutions shall explore income-generating projects such as fee-levying part-time training programmes, and also by linking the training with production outputs but without compromising the quality of training.
- The Ministry together with the TVEC, and employer organizations shall take steps to explore funding from the ETF for supporting the up-skilling of industry employees.
- The Ministry together with the TVEC and TVET institutions shall explore the possibility of securing a CESS and payroll levy as specified in the TVE Act No. 20 of 1990, and introduce new legislation to make it compulsory for the industry contribution for TVET sector development.

Core Area – TVET 7: Regulation, and Governance and Management

Directive Principles

- DP 1: All technical and vocational education and training institutions while exploring their full mandates must take steps to update the respective legal frameworks periodically to cater to the emerging challenges and opportunities of the changing socio-economic environment.
- DP 2: All reforms in the technical and vocational education and training sector should be supported by revised legislation and accompanying regulations.
- DP 3: All TVET institutions, agencies, and centres must have effective planning and monitoring mechanisms and be subjected to review and monitoring through regular oversight mechanisms.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-TVET 7.1: The TVET regulatory agencies and the institutions should be empowered with legislative enactments which are reviewed and updated periodically

Recommended Strategic Activities

- Review the mandates of the TVEC and the TVET institutions enacted by respective Acts of the Parliament periodically and align them to suit changing socio-economic circumstances of the country and the requirements of the TVET institutions and their provisions with special reference to the following:
 - Mandate/Objects of the TVET institutions and agencies
 - Functions and powers
 - Provision for strengthening the regulatory mechanisms
 - Provision for the public, private, NGO, and industry-based training
 - Provision for industry collaboration with the TVET sector
 - Provision for income generation
 - Provision for collaborative TVET programmes with local and foreign institutions in areas of high labour market demand
 - Provision for empowering of managerial staff of respective intuitions to execute the powers vested by the Acts and Ordinances
 - Provision for empowering respective institutions to take legal action against violators of the provisions of the Acts and Ordinances
 - Provision for effective implementation of NVQF and quality assurances system

- The TVEC shall take steps to work in collaboration with the respective Divisional Secretariats to identify unregistered institutions and guide them to comply with the TVEC prescribed regulations.
- The Ministry must review and monitor the implementation of full mandates of Acts at periodic intervals.

Policy-TVET 7.2:

The TVET sector shall be directed by a long-term strategic development plan prepared in accordance with the National TVET Policy Framework

Recommended Strategic Activities

- As specified by the TVE Act No. 20 of 1990, the Ministry and the TVEC in liaison with leading TVET institutions shall prepare a 5-year national TVET development plan in keeping with the National Policy Framework on TVET prescribed by the NEC, and it should be reviewed and updated annually.
- The TVEC by the middle of each year shall prepare and publish a macro level forecast of annual training demand for the ensuing year.
- The TVEC institutions shall develop and implement vocational education and training plans for industry sectors and provinces based on the national TVET development plan prepared jointly by the TVEC and TVET institutions and also by giving due consideration to the TVEC prescribed macro-level forecast of annual training demand.
- All Training centres should have a 5-year development plan and accompanying annual action plans, based on the annual training plans prescribed by the TVET institutions, and the TVEC should consider their availability and effectiveness in the implementation of such plans for the renewal of the registration of training centres.
- The Ministry and the TVEC should monitor the effective implementation of the above plans by the TVET institutions and their centres to ensure the development of the TVET sector as per the national policy directions.

Core Area – TVET 8: Information Management and Research

Directive Principles

- DP 1: The management decision by the higher management of the technical and vocational education and training sector must be made based on the labour market and training information and research findings.
- DP 2: The technical and vocational education and training sector must be fostered through a vibrant research and innovation system.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-TVET 8.1: The TVET sector must be guided and directed through evidence-based, well-informed decisions derived from real-time analyses of the labour market and training information, and research findings

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The Ministry and the TVEC shall take determined efforts to strengthen the existing MIS system with extensive linkage with the network of TVET Institutions.
- The TVEC must coordinate and support all training institutions and centres to have transaction support for MIS with operational and financial information with real-time data entry.
- The TVEC through the central MIS should maintain a graduate tracking facility to trace the movement of their alumni and to estimate the employability of NVQ certificate holders.
- The TVEC and all the public TVET institutions must compile reports on management information annually to support the evidence-based decision-making by the management of respective institutions, regulatory bodies, and the Ministry and the policymakers.
- The TVEC shall take steps to identify data sources, and capture and map data relevant to demand and supply of skills in the labour market.
- The TVEC together with TVET institutions shall take steps to strengthen the research and innovation programme in the following lines;
 - Seek enhanced funding from the Treasury to support research and innovations undertaken by the staff of the TVEC and the TVET institutions,
 - Embark on commissioned research on identified issues and themes of national importance,
 - Establish a dedicated cadre for full-time research staff, and
 - Conduct annual research symposia with the publication of proceedings.

IV කොටස - V වැනි වෙළුම

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1. තත්ත්ව සමාලෝචනය

1.1. හැඳින්වීම

භික්ෂුන් වහන්සේලාගේ අධ්‍යාපන කටයුතු සඳහා ප්‍රමුඛත්වය දෙමින් ගොඩ නැගුණු අධ්‍යාපන ආයතනය ලෙස පිරිවෙණ හැඳින්විය හැකිය. එය පැරණි භාරතීය ආරාමික අභාසය ලබමින් ලක්දිව බුදුසසුන පිහිට වූ කාලයේ සිට ලංකාව පුරා ව්‍යාප්තව ඇත. ඒ අනුව, ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ විධිමත් අධ්‍යාපනයේ ආරම්භය ලෙස පිරිවෙණ අධ්‍යාපනය දැක්විය හැකි ය. පූර්ව යටත්විජිත යුගය, යටත් විජිත යුගය සහ නිදහසින් පසු ආර්ථික හා දේශපාලන ප්‍රතිසංස්කරණත් ගෝලීයකරණය, කාර්මීකරණය, සන්නිවේදනය, හා තාක්ෂණයේ දියුණුවත් හේතුවෙන් සෑම ක්ෂේත්‍රයකම කැපී පෙනෙන පරිවර්තනයක් සිදු විය. එහි ප්‍රතිඵලයක් ලෙස, දීර්ඝ ඉතිහාසයකට උරුමකම් කියූ පිරිවෙණ සම්ප්‍රදාය සහ පිරිවෙණ අධ්‍යාපන ක්‍රමයේ ව්‍යුහාත්මක වෙනස්කම් රැසක් සිදු විය.

එම ඇති වූ වෙනස්කම් සැලකිල්ලට ගනිමින් 1979 අංක 64 දරන පිරිවෙණ අධ්‍යාපන පනතින් හා 1980 අංක 01 දරන නියෝග මාලාව මගින් පිරිවෙණ ආයතන ශක්තිමත් හා විධිමත් ආයතනයක් බවට පත් කරන ලදී. එසේ වුවත් ගැටලුව වන්නේ, පිරිවෙණ අධ්‍යාපන පනතේ පරමාර්ථ සාධනය කරන භික්ෂු පිරිසක් වර්තමාන පිරිවෙණ අධ්‍යාපනයෙන් බිහි නොවීම යි. මේ සඳහා බලපා ඇති හේතු ලෙස, පනතේ එන පරමාර්ථවල ඇතැම් වැදගත් අංශවලින් පිරිවෙණ අධ්‍යාපනය බැහැරවී තිබීම හා පනත හා නියෝග අභිබවා ගොස් තිබීම, පිරිවෙණ පනත සංශෝධනයට අවස්ථා කිහිපයක දී උත්සාහ ගත් නමුත් එම උත්සාහයන් අසාර්ථක වීම (උදා: 1984, 1989, 1994 හා 2010 පත්කළ කමිටුවල වර්තා නීතිගත නොවීම), ලෝකීකත්වයට බරව පිරිවෙණ අධ්‍යාපන පනත මේ වන විට ක්‍රියාත්මක වීම හා පිරිවෙණ විෂයමාලාව හා විෂය නිර්දේශය රටේ පොදු අධ්‍යාපන ක්‍රමයට අනුගත කරවීමට කලක් තිස්සේ උත්සාහ දරා තිබීම යනාදිය දැක්විය හැකි ය.

ඒ අනුව, පිරිවෙණ අධ්‍යාපන පනත වර්තමාන පිරිවෙණ අධ්‍යාපන ව්‍යුහය සමඟ ගළපා ගැනීමේ දී යම් පරස්පරතාවක් පෙන්නුම් කරයි. ශිෂ්‍යයාගේ දැනුම මෙන්ම ශික්ෂණය ද සමබරව පෝෂණය කළයුතු අතර, ඊට ගැළපෙන විෂයමාලාවක් සහ ආනුෂංගික ක්‍රියාවන් ද නිර්දේශ විය යුතු ය. ඒ සම්බන්ධයෙන් වර්තමාන පිරිවෙණ අධ්‍යාපනයේ යම් හිඳුසක් ඇති බව පෙනී යන හෙයින් පිරිවෙණ අධ්‍යාපන ක්‍රමය කාලානුරූපීව ප්‍රතිව්‍යුහගත කිරීම සුදුසු වෙයි. පිරිවෙණහි පවතින පන්ති ක්‍රමය, විෂයමාලාව, විෂය නිර්දේශය හා එය ක්‍රියාත්මක කෙරෙන ආකාරය, ශිෂ්‍යයා ඇගයීමට ලක් කරන අවස්ථා හා ක්‍රමවේදයන්, අධ්‍යාපනය අවසානයෙහි ශිෂ්‍යයා ලබාගන්නා සාධන මට්ටම ආදී සියල්ල මෙම ප්‍රතිව්‍යුහගත කිරීමට ඇතුළත් වේ.

මෙම තත්ත්ව සමාලෝචනය තුළින්, පිරිවෙණ අධ්‍යාපනයේ ආරම්භය හා ව්‍යාප්තිය, පිරිවෙණ අධ්‍යාපනය කෙරෙහි රජයේ මැදිහත්වීම: නිදහසට පෙර හා පසු, පිරිවෙණ අධ්‍යාපන පනත එහි බලතල හා කාර්යභාරය, පිරිවෙණ අධ්‍යාපන පරිපාලනය, වර්තමාන පිරිවෙණ පද්ධතිය පිළිබඳව සාකච්ඡා කෙරේ.

1.2. පිරිවෙණ අධ්‍යාපනයේ ආරම්භය හා ව්‍යාප්තිය

ක්‍රි.ව. හයවන සියවසෙහි ලොව පහළ වූ ගෞතම බුදුරජාණන් වහන්සේ තමන් අවබෝධ කරගත් ධර්මය අන්‍යයන් වෙත සම්ප්‍රේෂණය කිරීමේ ක්‍රියාවලිය අරඹමින් බරණැස් ඉසිපතන මගදායේ දී කොණ්ඩකද්ද ආදී නම ශ්‍රාවකයින් පස්දෙනෙකුට දහම් දෙසූහ. එය බෞද්ධ අධ්‍යාපනයේ ආරම්භය ලෙස සැලකේ. විශිෂ්ට ආචාර්යවරයෙකු වශයෙන් විවිධ ක්‍රමවේද මගින් කරුණු පැහැදිලි කිරීමට බුදුරජාණන් වහන්සේ සමත් වූහ. උන්වහන්සේ යටතේ ශික්ෂණය ලද දක්ෂ ශ්‍රාවකයෝ ද එකී සමත්කම ප්‍රදර්ශනය කළහ. එය බුද්ධ පරිනිර්වාණයෙන් පසුව ද අඛණ්ඩව පැවතිණ. ක්‍රි.පූ. තෙවන සියවසේ දී මිහිඳු මාහිමියන් මගින් ශ්‍රී ලංකාවට ද එම අධ්‍යාපන ක්‍රමය හඳුන්වාදුන් අතර අනුරාධපුර මහා විහාරය එකල එම අධ්‍යාපනය ක්‍රියාත්මක කළ ප්‍රධාන මධ්‍යස්ථානය විය. පසුව ලක්දිව වෙනත් තැන්වලට ද එම අධ්‍යාපන ක්‍රමය පැතිර ගියේ ය.

තදානුබද්ධ නරාගන දේශනා ගුරු මුඛයෙන් ඇසීම, වාචෝද්ගත කිරීම හා එහි අර්ථය විග්‍රහාත්මකව පිරික්සීම එහිදී සිදුවිය. තවද, ගුරු ඇසුරෙන් ලබාගත් ගැඹුරු ඥානය හා ජීවිත පරිඥානය මෙන්ම ආරාමික පසුබිම තුළ පැවති ප්‍රායෝගික ක්‍රියාකාරකම් නිසා භික්ෂුන් වහන්සේලා තුළ සුවිශේෂ ගුරු පෞරුෂයක් ගොඩනැගුණි. එසේම, ඔවුහු ඥානසම්පාදකයන් වශයෙන් ද ක්‍රියා කළහ. ඒ නිසා රජුගේ පටන් රටවැසියා දක්වා වූ ගිහි පිරිසට අවශ්‍ය බුද්ධිමය මාර්ගෝපදේශ භික්ෂුන් වෙතින් ලැබිණ. විදේශ ආක්‍රමණ, දේශීය විප්ලව, දුර්භික්ෂ යනාදි සංකීර්ණ අවස්ථා හා විවිධ ආගමික මතිමතාන්තර ආදියට නොබියව මුහුණ දෙමින් මෙම අධ්‍යාපන ක්‍රියාවලියේ නිරත වූ භික්ෂුහු, බුදුදහමත් බුදුසසුනත් රටේ සංස්කෘතියන් ආරක්ෂා කරගත්හ. ඒ සඳහා අවශ්‍ය රාජ්‍ය අනුග්‍රහය ද නොඅඩුව ලැබිණ.

මුල් අවධියෙහි අධ්‍යාපනය සඳහා ම නිශ්චිත ව වෙන් වූ ස්ථාන නො තිබිණි. භික්ෂුන් වහන්සේලා වැඩ සිටි ආරාමය ම

අධ්‍යාපනය ලබාදෙන ස්ථානය විය. එම ආරාමය 'පර්වේණා' නම් විය. ආචාර්යවරයා නැවතී සිටින එම පිරිවේණාට ගොස් ශිෂ්‍යයෝ ඉගෙන ගත්හ. ක්‍රි.ව. පස්වන සියවස වන විට ඒවායේ පුස්තකාල පවා තිබුණි. මහාවිහාරයන්හි සන්නිපාතශාලා වැනි විශාල ගොඩනැගිලි වූ අතර ඒවායෙහි ද ඉගැන්වීම් සිදුකර තිබේ. අනුරාධපුර ලෝවාමහා ප්‍රාසාදයේ ඒ ඒ මහල්වල වෙන් වෙන් ව ඉගැන්වීම් කටයුතු සිදුවී ඇති බවට සාධක තිබේ. ක්‍රි.ව. පස්වන සියවස වන විට මහාවිහාරය හා අභයගිරිය යන විහාරද්වය ජාත්‍යන්තර මට්ටමින් ක්‍රියාත්මක වූ අධ්‍යාපන මධ්‍යස්ථාන බවට පත්ව තිබිණ. ෆාහියන්, සියුංසියැං වැනි චීන ජාතික නික්ෂුන්ගේ දේශාටන වාර්තාවල ඒ පිළිබඳ තොරතුරු සඳහන්ව ඇත. එම වාර්තාවලින් අනාවරණය වන කරුණු අනුව නූතන ලෝක සන්දර්භයෙහි දක්නට ඇති විශ්වවිද්‍යාල මට්ටමේ අධ්‍යාපනයක් එවකට ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ ආරාමික අධ්‍යාපනය තුළ ක්‍රියාත්මකව තිබූ බව පෙනෙයි. විවිධ රාජධානි යුගයන්හි අඛණ්ඩ ව පැවත ආ මෙම අධ්‍යාපන ක්‍රමය තුළ ප්‍රබල අධ්‍යාපන ආයතන රැසක් මෙරට ක්‍රියාත්මක විය. ඒ අතර, තොටගමුවේ විජයබා පිරිවේණා, කැරගල පද්මාවතී පිරිවේණා, විද්‍යාගම සනාතන්ද පිරිවේණා, ඉරුගල්කුලතිලක පිරිවේණා හා පැපිලියාන සුනේත්‍රාදේවී පිරිවේණා සුප්‍රසිද්ධ විය. මෙම පිරිවේණි ක්‍රියාත්මක වූ අධ්‍යාපන පටිපාටිය විමසීමෙන් පැහැදිලි වන්නේ එකල රටේ සැමටම පොදු සහ අවශ්‍ය අධ්‍යාපනයක් පිරිවේණා තුළින් ලැබුණු බවයි.

ක්‍රි.ව. 1505 දී ලක්දිවට පැමිණි පෘතුගීසීන්ගේ ආගමි ව්‍යාප්තියෙන් ද, ඉන්පසු පැමිණි ලන්දේසි ආක්‍රමණයෙන් සහ දැඩි ආගමි ප්‍රචාරණයෙන් ද, බෞද්ධ ආරාම කේන්ද්‍ර කරගත් අධ්‍යාපනය මෙන් ම බුද්ධශාසනය ද ශීඝ්‍රයෙන් පිරිහීමට ලක්වුණි. ලක්දිවෙන් විශ්‍රාමයෙන් පැවති බෞද්ධ අධ්‍යාපනයත්, ශාසනයත් නැවත නංවාලන්නට දැන අටවන සියවසේ වැඩසිටි වැලිවිට ශ්‍රී සරණාංකර ස්වාමීන්ද්‍රයන් වහන්සේ පුරෝගාමී වූහ.

සංඝරාජ මානිමියන්ගෙන් ධර්මශාස්ත්‍ර හදුන්වා දී කරතොට ධම්මාරාම නිමියන් මාතර වෙහෙරගමපිට විහාරයේ වැඩ සිටිමින් ප්‍රමුඛ ශාස්ත්‍ර ශාලාවක් ආරම්භ කළහ. උන්වහන්සේගේ ශිෂ්‍යයන්ගෙන් කෙනෙක් වූ බෙන්තර අන්වදස්සි නිමියන් බෙන්තර වනවාස විහාරයේ 1827 දී ආරම්භ කළ විද්‍යාස්ථානයේ ඇති කළ ශාස්ත්‍රාලෝකය යුරෝපය දක්වා පැතිර ගිය බව වාර්තා වේ. කරතොට ධම්මාරාම මානිමියන්ගේ ම ශිෂ්‍යයෙකු වූ ගාල්ලේ මේධංකර නිමියෝ පැල්මඩුල්ල විහාරස්ථානයේ තවත් එවැනිම විද්‍යාස්ථානයක් ආරම්භ කළහ. රන්මලානේ පදිංචිව සිටි දොන් පුරෝලිස් ලේකම් ඇතුළු සැදැහැති බෞද්ධයෝ ක්‍රි.ව. 1849 දී රන්මලානේ යෝග්‍යස්ථානයක අධ්‍යාපන මධ්‍යස්ථානයක් ඉදිකර එය එකල පහතරට කීර්තිධර පඬිවරයාණන් වහන්සේ නමක් වූ වලානේ ශ්‍රී සිද්ධාර්ථ නිමියන් වෙත පූජාකළහ. එය පරමධම්මචේතිය පිරිවේණා නම් විය. එහි අධ්‍යාපනය ලැබූ නික්කඩුවේ ශ්‍රී සුමංගල මානිමිපාණන් වහන්සේ 1873 දී කොළඹ මාලිගාකන්දේ විද්‍යාදාය පිරිවේණාත්, රන්මලානේ ශ්‍රී ධර්මාලෝක මානිමිපාණන් වහන්සේ 1875 දී පැලියගොඩ විද්‍යාලංකාර පිරිවේණාත් ආරම්භ කළහ. මෙම පිරිවේණ දෙක මුල් කරගෙන ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ පිරිවේණ අධ්‍යාපනය නව ජීවයක් ලැබීය. ඒවායෙහි ශාඛා ප්‍රශාඛා පිරිවේණ ශ්‍රී ලංකාව පුරා වේගයෙන් ස්ථාපිත විය.

1.3. පිරිවේණ අධ්‍යාපනය කෙරෙහි රජයේ මැදිහත්වීම: නිදහසට පෙර හා පසු

විද්‍යාදාය හා විද්‍යාලංකාර පිරිවේණවල පැවති විශිෂ්ට අධ්‍යාපනික පසුබිම දෙස විදෙස් ඇගයීමකට ලක්වී ඇත. ඒවා අඛණ්ඩව විධිමත් ලෙස පවත්වාගෙන යාම සඳහා අනුබල දීම වශයෙන් විද්‍යාදාය හා විද්‍යාලංකාර පිරිවේණවලට විශේෂ ආධාර මුදලක් වාර්ෂිකව පිරිනමා තිබේ. එසේම අනෙක් පිරිවේණ සඳහා ද ඊට වඩා අඩු මට්ටමකින් ආධාර මුදල් පිරිනමා ඇත. කෙසේ වුවත්, 1943 වර්ෂයේ දී අධ්‍යාපන අමාත්‍ය ආචාර්ය සී. ඩබ්ලිව්. ඩබ්ලිව්. කන්නන්ගර මහතා 'පිරිවේණ උපදේශක සභාව' පත් කරන ලදී. එහි නිර්දේශ මත 1939 අංක 31 දරන අධ්‍යාපන ආඥා පනතේ 32 වන වගන්තිය අනුව සකස් වූ 'ආධාර ලබන පිරිවේණ පිළිබඳ ව්‍යවස්ථා සංග්‍රහය' රාජ්‍ය මන්ත්‍රණ සභාවේ සම්මත වී 1947 සිට ක්‍රියාත්මක විය. මෙය ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ රජය විසින් සම්මත කළ පිරිවේණ පිළිබඳ මුල් ම රෙගුලාසි මාලාව වේ.

මෙම නියෝග ක්‍රියාත්මක වී නොබෝ කලකින් පිරිවේණවලට වැඩි වරප්‍රසාද ලබාදෙන ලෙසට බෞද්ධ සමාජයෙන් ඉල්ලීම් ඉදිරිපත් විය. ඒ අනුව, සැකසුණු වගන්ති 36 කින් යුතු පිරිවේණ නියෝග මාලාව 1959 දී පාර්ලිමේන්තුවේ සම්මත විය. ඊට අනුව කතිෂ්ඨ, ජ්‍යෙෂ්ඨ හා විශ්වවිද්‍යාල අනුබද්ධායතන යන වර්ග තුනකට අයත් පිරිවේණ බිහිවිය. රජයේ පාසල්වල 6 ශ්‍රේණියේ සිට අ.පො.ස. සාමාන්‍ය පෙළ පන්ති හා ප්‍රාචීන ප්‍රාරම්භ පන්ති කතිෂ්ඨ පිරිවේණක ද, අ.පො.ස. උසස් පෙළ පන්ති හා ප්‍රාචීන මධ්‍යම පන්ති ජ්‍යෙෂ්ඨ පිරිවේණක ද, විශ්වවිද්‍යාලයක අවසරය මත ප්‍රථම උපාධි පරීක්ෂණය සඳහා පන්ති විශ්වවිද්‍යාල අනුබද්ධායතන පිරිවේණවල ද පැවැත්වීමට ඒ අනුව අවකාශ හිමි විය.

මෙම නියෝග මාලාව ක්‍රියාත්මක වීමත් සමඟ, පැවිදි ශිෂ්‍ය පිරිස ඉක්මවා විශාල ගිහි ශිෂ්‍ය පිරිසක් පිරිවේණ අධ්‍යාපනයට එක්විය. ඒ සමඟ ම එතෙක් පැවති ත්‍රිපිටක ධර්මය හා තදානුබද්ධ භාෂා ශාස්ත්‍ර මෙන්ම, සාම්ප්‍රදායික විෂයන් සමඟ රටේ පැවති සාමාන්‍ය අධ්‍යාපනයේ විෂයමාලාව ද පිරිවේණ තුළ ක්‍රියාත්මක වන්නට පටන් ගැණිණ. කලක් යන විට පිරිවේණ අධ්‍යාපනයට ම ආවේණික වූ විෂයයන් යටපත් වෙමින් සාමාන්‍ය අධ්‍යාපනයට අදාළ විෂයමාලාව නැගී සිටියේ ය. එහෙයින් මෙම අධ්‍යාපන ක්‍රමය තුළින් පිරිවේණ අධ්‍යාපනයේ අපේක්ෂිත අරමුණු ඉටු නොවන බව මහාසංඝරත්නය දැඩිව අවධාරණය කළහ. ඒ අනුව,

1967 අංක 4 දරණ චක්‍රලේඛය මගින් පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපනයේ වෙනස්කම් ඇති කිරීමට උත්සාහ ගත් නමුත් එයින්ද අපේක්ෂිත ආකාරයේ ප්‍රතිඵලයක් නො ලැබිණි. මෙම පසුබිම යටතේ එවකට සිටි අධ්‍යාපන අමාත්‍යවරයා විසින් 'පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපන විශේෂ කමිටුව' නමින් කමිටුවක් පත්කරන ලදී. එම කමිටුව විසින් පූර්ණ වාර්තාවක් රජයට ඉදිරිපත් කරන ලදී. එම වාර්තාව පදනම් කොට සකස් කළ 1979 අංක 64 දරන පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපන පනත, ශ්‍රී ලංකා ප්‍රජාතාන්ත්‍රික සමාජවාදී ජනරජයේ පාර්ලිමේන්තුවේ සම්මත වී එහි පනතේ නියෝග හා විධිවිධාන 1980.10.01 දින සිට ක්‍රියාත්මක විය.

1.4. පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපන පනත එහි බලතල හා කාර්යභාරය

පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපන පනතේ පැහැදිලි කර ඇති ආකාරයට ක්‍රියාත්මක වූ පිරිවෙන් වර්ග තුනකි. i) මූලික පිරිවෙන්, ii) මහ පිරිවෙන් හා iii) පිරිවෙන් විද්‍යායතන යනුවෙනි. විද්‍යාදාය, විද්‍යාලංකාර යන පිරිවෙන් දෙක හැර ඒ වන විට මෙරට ක්‍රියාත්මක වූ අනෙකුත් සියලු පිරිවෙන් එම පනතට යටත් කෙරිණි. එසේම, එකී පනතට යටත් සියලු පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යක්ෂ මණ්ඩලයක් මගින් පාලනය කරනු ලැබේ.

1979 අංක 64 දරන පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපන පනත පනත අංශ වලින් සමන්විත වේ.

- I. පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපනයේ පරමාර්ථ හා අරමුණු
- II. පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපන මණ්ඩලය
- III. පිරිවෙන් වර්ග කිරීම සහ පිරිවෙන් අභ්‍යාස ආයතන පිහිටුවීම
- IV. අධ්‍යක්ෂ ජනරාල්වරයාගේ බලතල කාර්ය හා කාර්යව්‍ය
- V. පිරිවෙන් කෘත්‍යාධිකාරීන් වහන්සේලා සහ පරිවේණිකවාර්යවරුන්
- VI. පොදු විධිවිධාන

මෙම පනත ක්‍රියාත්මකවීමට පටන් ගැනීමෙන් පසු පැන නැගී ඇතැම් ගැටලු සැලකිල්ලට ගත් පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපන මණ්ඩලය පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපන පනත සංශෝධනය කිරීම සඳහා කිහිප අවස්ථාවකම යෝජනා ඉදිරිපත් කොට ඇත.

- I. 1984 ප්‍රකාශයට පත් කමිටු වාර්තාව
- II. 1989 ප්‍රකාශයට පත් කමිටු වාර්තාව
- III. 1994 ප්‍රකාශයට පත් කමිටු වාර්තාව
- IV. 2010 ප්‍රකාශයට පත් කෙටුම්පත (මෙය නීතිපති අනුමැතිය තෙක් ක්‍රියාත්මක වී ඇත.)

මෙතෙක් මෙම එකඳු වාර්තාවක් හෝ කෙටුම්පතක් ක්‍රියාවට නැංවී නොමැත.

1.5. පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපන පරිපාලනය

පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපන පරිපාලනය සිදුවන්නේ පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපන පනත මගින් ස්ථාපිත පිරිවෙන් මණ්ඩලය මගිනි. එය උපදේශක තත්ත්වයෙන් මෙන් ම විධායක තත්ත්වයෙන් ද ක්‍රියාකරන උත්තරීතර මණ්ඩලයකි. අධ්‍යාපන අමාත්‍යාංශයේ ලේකම්වරයා විසින් අමාත්‍යවරයාගේ සාමාන්‍ය විධානයකට හා පාලනයට යටත් ව පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපනය පිළිබඳ වගකීම දරනු ලැබේ.

පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යක්ෂකවරයාගේ සහයට නියෝජ්‍ය හා සහකාර අධ්‍යක්ෂකවරුන්, පිරිවෙන් උපදේශකවරුන් හා කාර්ය මණ්ඩලයක් පත්කොට තිබේ. එමෙන් ම, ඒ ඒ පිරිවෙන්හි කෘත්‍යාධිකාරී නිමවරුන්, පරිවේණිකවරුන් මෙන් ම පරිවේණිකවාර්යවරු ඒකාබද්ධ ව ඒ ඒ පිරිවෙන්හි ශිෂ්‍ය සංඛ්‍යාව ප්‍රවර්ධනය, විෂය ඉගැන්වීම, විෂය දැනුම, කුසලතා ප්‍රවර්ධනය, විෂය සමගාමී ක්‍රියාකාරකම් වර්ධනය මෙන්ම නිකුත් හා ගිහි සිසුන්ගේ සාරධර්ම සංවර්ධන වැඩසටහන් ක්‍රියාත්මක කිරීම කරනු ලැබේ.

1.6. වර්තමාන පිරිවෙන් පද්ධතිය

අධ්‍යාපන අමාත්‍යාංශය විසින් නිකුත් කර ඇති පාසල් සංගණන වාර්තාව (2020) ට අනුව, පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපනය තුළ මූලික පිරිවෙන්, මහපිරිවෙන් හා පිරිවෙන් විද්‍යායතන යනුවෙන් පිරිවෙන් 816 ක් ස්ථාපනය වී ඇති අතර, ඒවායේ අධ්‍යාපනය ලබන ශිෂ්‍ය ප්‍රමාණය 69,878 ක් වේ. මෙයින් 36,497 ක් පැවිදි ශිෂ්‍යයන් වන අතර, ගිහි සිසුන්ගේ ප්‍රමාණය 33,381 කි. මෙම පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපනය තුළ සමස්ත ගුරුහවතුන්ගේ ප්‍රමාණය 7,336 කි. පැවිදි ගුරු සංඛ්‍යාව 3,428 කි. ගිහි ගුරු සංඛ්‍යාව 3,908 කි.

1.7. නිගමනය

සම්බුද්ධ ශාසනයේ විරෑවැත්ම උදෙසා හික්ෂුන් වහස්සේලාට අධ්‍යාපනය ලබා දීමේ අරමුණින් පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපන ආයතන සකස් විය. එසේ වුවත්, පරිභෝජනවාදී සංස්කෘතිය, යටත්විජිතකරණය, කාර්මීකරණය, ගෝලීයකරණය, විද්‍යාව, තාක්ෂණය හා සන්නිවේදනයේ දියුණුව ආදිය මගින් සමාජයේ ඇති කර ඇති විවලයනා හා සමාජයේ ඇති වූ ශීඝ්‍ර නවීකරණයන් සියළු අංශයන් කෙරෙහි බලපා ඇති බව ප්‍රත්‍යක්ෂ කරුණකි. ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ පිරිවෙන් සම්ප්‍රදායන්, පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපනයන්, සම්බුද්ධ ශාසනයන් මෙබඳු හේතූන් නිසා යම් යම් ගැටලු හා අභියෝග වලට මුහුණු පා ඇත.

එබැවින් දීර්ඝ ඉතිහාසයකට උරුමකම් කියන පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපන පද්ධතිය ආරක්ෂා කර ගනිමින් සම්බුද්ධ ශාසනයේ විරෑවැත්ම උදෙසා අදාළ වන පරිදි එය ප්‍රතිසංවිධානය කිරීම අධ්‍යාපනික මෙන්ම ජාතික හා ශාසනික අවශ්‍යතාවක් වේ. එසේම එය පවතින සමාජ විවලයනාවලට ඔරොත්තු දෙන සහ අනාගත තාක්ෂණික ලෝකයේ ඇති විය හැකි අභියෝගයන් පිළිබඳ අවබෝධයෙන් යුතුව කළයුත්තක් වේ. පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපන පද්ධතිය ආරක්ෂා කර ගැනීමේ දී විශේෂයෙන් ම පිරිවෙන් ශිෂ්‍යයා හා ගුරුවරයා ආරක්ෂා කර ගැනීම මූලික අවශ්‍යතාවකි. ඒ අනුව, පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපන පද්ධතිය තවදුරටත් සුරක්ෂිතව පවත්වාගැනීමත්, පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපන පනත මගින් දක්වා ඇති පරමාර්ථ සාධනය කර ගැනීමත් සඳහා කාලානුරූපීව සිදුවී ඇති සමාජ විවලයනාවන්ට අනුගත වෙමින් මෙම පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපනය සඳහා වන ජාතික ප්‍රතිපත්තිය සකස් කරන ලදී.

2. අග්‍රගණ්‍ය පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපනයක් බිහිකිරීම සඳහා ජාතික ප්‍රතිපත්තියක් සම්පාදනය කිරීම

ජාතික අධ්‍යාපන ප්‍රතිපත්ති රාමුවේ (2020-2030) III වන කොටසෙහි දක්වා ඇති මෙහෙයවීමේ මූලධර්ම සහ පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපන අංශයට විශේෂිත වූ මූලික ක්ෂේත්‍ර 7 ක් යටතේ, පිරිවෙන් ප්‍රතිපත්ති යෝජනා සහ නිර්දේශිත උපාය මාර්ග සකස් කර ඇත.

ඒ අනුව; (1) පැවිදි හා ගිහි සිසුන් පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපනයට ප්‍රවේශ වීම, (2) ගුණාත්මක අධ්‍යාපනය, (3) පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපනයේ විනය හා ආකල්ප, (4) මානව සම්පත් සංවර්ධනය, (5) භෞතික සම්පත් හා මූල්‍ය සම්පත්, (6) පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපන ක්‍රමය ප්‍රතිව්‍යුහගත කිරීම හා (7) දස සීල මාතාවන්ගේ අධ්‍යාපනය, මූලික ක්ෂේත්‍ර ලෙස හඳුනා ගෙන ඇත.

තත්ත්ව සමාලෝචනයේ පෙන්වා දී ඇති පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපන ක්ෂේත්‍රයේ ප්‍රගමනයට බාධාවක් වන ගැටලු සහ අභියෝග පිළිබඳව අවධානය යොමු කරමින් සියලු මූලික ක්ෂේත්‍ර සහ අංශ ආවරණය වන පරිදි ප්‍රතිපත්ති සැලසුම් ක්‍රියාවලිය සිදු කර ඇත.

මූලික ක්ෂේත්‍රය 1: පැවිදි හා ගිහි සිසුන් පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපනය සඳහා ප්‍රවේශය

මෙහෙයවීමේ මූලධර්ම

- මෙ.මු 1: පිරිවෙන් ආයතන පද්ධතිය ක්‍රමවත් ලෙස පවත්වා ගැනීම සඳහා ප්‍රතිපත්ති හා නියාමන රාමුවක් සැකසීමේ වගකීම පිරිවෙන් මණ්ඩලයේ උපදෙස් පරිදි රජය විසින් සිදු කළ යුතු ය.
- මෙ.මු 2: පිරිවෙන් ආයතන තුළ අවශ්‍ය අවස්ථා පුළුල් කිරීම පිරිවෙන් කෘත්‍යාධිකාරී නිමයන්ගේ ප්‍රධානත්වයෙන් පිරිවෙන් සංවර්ධන සභා සහ පාලක සභා විසින් සිදු කළ යුතු ය.

ප්‍රතිපත්ති යෝජනා හා උපාය මාර්ග

ප්‍රතිපත්තිය 1.1:

පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපනයට යොමු වන ගිනි පැවිදි ශිෂ්‍ය සංඛ්‍යාව වර්ධනය කිරීම

නිර්දේශිත උපාය මාර්ග

- බුද්ධිශාසන අමාත්‍යාංශය හා ඒ ඒ නිකායන්හි මහනායක ස්වාමීන්වහන්සේලා විසින් කුල දරුවන් සසුන්ගත කිරීම ප්‍රවර්ධනය සඳහා අවශ්‍ය පියවර ගැනීම.
- අධ්‍යාපන අමාත්‍යාංශය, පිරිවෙන් ශාඛාව, කෘත්‍යාධිකාරී, පරිවේණාධිපති ගිම්මරන් විසින් පිරිවෙන් විද්‍යායතනවලට ගිනි සසුන් බඳවා ගැනීමේ ප්‍රවර්ධනාත්මක වැඩසටහන් ක්‍රියාත්මක කිරීම.

ප්‍රතිපත්තිය 1.2:

පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපනයේ විධිමත්බව තහවුරු කිරීම හා පවතින අවස්ථාවන් තවදුරටත් පුළුල් කිරීම

නිර්දේශිත උපාය මාර්ග

- පිරිවෙන් ශාඛාවේ උපදෙස් මත අධ්‍යාපන අමාත්‍යාංශය මගින් දේශීය හා විදේශීය ශිෂ්‍ය භික්ෂූන් වහන්සේලාට පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපන අවස්ථා පුළුල් කිරීම.
- පිරිවෙන් ශාඛාව, කෘත්‍යාධිකාරී හා පරිවේණාධිපති ගිම්ම විසින් ප්‍රාථමික අධ්‍යාපනය අවශ්‍ය පිරිවෙන්වලට අදාළ පහසුකම් සැලසීම.

මූලික ක්ෂේත්‍රය 2: ගුණාත්මක අධ්‍යාපනය

මෙහෙයවීමේ මූලධර්ම

- මෙ.මු 1: පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපනයේ ගුණාත්මකභාවය වැඩි දියුණු කිරීම සඳහා ප්‍රතිපත්තිමය වෙනස්කම් කිරීම පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපන මණ්ඩලයේ උපදෙස් මත රඳා විසින් සිදු කළ යුතුවේ.
- මෙ.මු 2: පිරිවෙන් විෂයමාලාව යාවත්කාලීන කිරීම හා ගුරුවරුන්ගේ දැනුම වැඩිදියුණු කිරීම සඳහා වැඩසටහන් ක්‍රියාත්මක කිරීම පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යක්ෂ, කෘත්‍යාධිකාරී හා පරිවේණාධිපති ගිම්මරන් විසින් සිදු කළ යුතු ය.

ප්‍රතිපත්ති යෝජනා හා උපාය මාර්ග

ප්‍රතිපත්තිය 2.1:

පනතේ එන පරමාර්ථ සාධනය වන පරිදි පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපනයේ ගුණාත්මකභාවය වැඩි දියුණු කිරීම

නිර්දේශිත උපාය මාර්ග

- අධ්‍යාපන අමාත්‍යාංශය, පිරිවෙන් මණ්ඩලය, පිරිවෙන් ශාඛාව හා ජාතික අධ්‍යාපන ආයතනය විසින් දැනුම හා ශික්ෂණය යන අංශ දෙක ම ලැබෙන සේ මූලික පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපනය ප්‍රතිව්‍යුහගත කිරීම (ඊට අදාළ යෝජනාවක්

මූලික ක්ෂේත්‍ර 06 හි දක්වා ඇත.), පනතේ දැක්වෙන සියලු පරමාර්ථ සාධනය කරවීමට සමත් විෂයමාලාවක් හඳුන්වාදීම (මෙහි දී බුද්ධිධර්මය වෙනමත්, විනය වෙනමත් විෂයවලට වෙන් කිරීම වඩා උචිත වේ.) හා එය ක්‍රියාවට නැංවීමේ දී පැරණි නිර්දේශිත ගුණිත අධ්‍යයන ක්‍රමය හා ව්‍යවස්ථාපිත රීතිය සමඟ, විෂයානුබද්ධ ගුරු පුහුණුව හා මානව සබඳතා පිළිබඳ පුහුණුව වැඩි දියුණු කිරීම සඳහා ජාතික අධ්‍යාපන ආයතනය සමඟ ඒකාබද්ධව වැඩසටහන් සංවිධානය කිරීම.

- අධ්‍යාපන අමාත්‍යාංශය, පිරිවෙන් මණ්ඩලය, පිරිවෙන් ශාඛාව සහ අදාළ ආයතන විසින් ශිෂ්‍යයන්ගේ මානසික සංවර්ධනය උදෙසා වූ අනිවාර්ය පුහුණු වැඩසටහන් දියත් කිරීම.
- අධ්‍යාපන අමාත්‍යාංශයේ පිරිවෙන් ශාඛාවේ මූලිකත්වයෙන් පරිවේණාධිපතිවරුන් විසින් පැවැදි සිසුන්ගේ ප්‍රායෝගික ක්‍රියාකාරකම් (භාවනා/ධර්ම සන්නිවේදන කුසලතා ආදිය) වර්ධනය කිරීමට පියවර ගැනීම.
- තොරතුරු හා සන්නිවේදන තාක්ෂණ නියෝජිතායතනය සහ ජාතික අධ්‍යාපන ආයතනය මගින් නූතන තොරතුරු තාක්ෂණවේදය පිරිවෙන් තුළ ඵලදායී ලෙස ක්‍රියාත්මක කරවීම.
- අධ්‍යාපන අමාත්‍යාංශය සහ බුද්ධිශාසන අමාත්‍යාංශය විසින් භාෂා පුහුණුව (ඉංග්‍රීසි, දෙමළ, පාලි, සංස්කෘත හා වෙනත් භාෂා) ප්‍රවර්ධනය කිරීම.
- පිරිවෙන් ශාඛාව, පරිවේණාධිපති හිමි විසින් ගිහි පැවැදි සියලු ශිෂ්‍යයන් සඳහා විෂය සමගාමී ක්‍රියාකාරකම් නිර්දේශ කිරීම.
- අධ්‍යාපන අමාත්‍යාංශය මගින් පිරිවෙන් ශාඛාවෙහි ධාරිතා සංවර්ධනය කිරීම.

මූලික ක්ෂේත්‍රය 3: පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපනය, විනය හා ආකල්ප

මෙහෙයවීමේ මූලධර්ම

මෙ.මු 1: පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපනය ලබන සිසුන්ගේ විනය හා ආකල්ප වර්ධනය සඳහා සුදුසු පරිසරයක් සකස් කිරීමේ වගකීම පිරිවෙන් මණ්ඩලයේ උපදෙස් මත රඳා විසින් සිදු කළ යුතු ය.

මෙ.මු 2: විනය සකස් කිරීම හා ආකල්ප වර්ධනය සඳහා වැඩසටහන් ක්‍රියාත්මක කිරීම පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යක්ෂ මණ්ඩලය, කෘතනාධිකාරී හා පරිවේණාධිපති හිමිවරුන් විසින් සිදු කළ යුතු ය.

ප්‍රතිපත්ති යෝජනා හා උපාය මාර්ග

ප්‍රතිපත්තිය 3.1: ශික්ෂණ මූලික පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපනයක් ස්ථාපනය කිරීම

නිර්දේශිත උපාය මාර්ග

- පිරිවෙන් මණ්ඩලය, අධ්‍යක්ෂ/පිරිවෙන් ශාඛාව, කෘතනාධිකාරී, පරිවේණාධිපති හිමි මගින් වඩාත් ප්‍රායෝගික ක්‍රියාකාරකම් සහිතව විනය හැඳුරිය හැකි වෙනම විෂය ධාරාවක් හඳුන්වා දීම.
- පිරිවෙන් මණ්ඩලය, අධ්‍යක්ෂ/පිරිවෙන් ශාඛාව, කෘතනාධිකාරී, පරිවේණාධිපති හිමි මගින් සෑම පිරිවේණාකට ම ධර්මය හා විනය පිළිබඳ මනා පරිවසක් ඇති හික්ෂුන් වහන්සේ නමක් ධර්ම අධ්‍යක්ෂ ලෙස පත් කිරීම හා උන්වහන්සේගේ කාර්යභාරය සැලසුම් කිරීම.
- අධ්‍යක්ෂ/පිරිවෙන් ශාඛාව, කෘතනාධිකාරී, පරිවේණාධිපති විසින් පිරිවෙන් සඳහා ආදර්ශමත් පොදු දින වර්ෂාවන් ක්‍රියාත්මක කිරීම.

- කෘතනාධිකාරී, පරිවේණාධිපති හා පිරිවෙන් ආචාර්යවරුන් විසින් නිකුත් කරනු ලබන වැඩසටහන් ක්‍රියාවට නැංවීම.
- කෘතනාධිකාරී, පරිවේණාධිපති හා පිරිවෙන් ආචාර්යවරුන් විසින් සාමාන්‍ය ජනතාව වෙතට මාසකට වරක් හෝ පැවැත්විය යුතු සාමාන්‍ය කාර්යය, විනය නීතියට අනුගතව උපසපත් නිකුත් වන සේලා දිනපතා සන්ධ්‍යාවේ ඇවැත් දෙසීම, මාසිකව උපෝසථ කිරීම කිරීම අනිවාර්ය කිරීම.
- අධ්‍යක්ෂ/පිරිවෙන් ශාඛාව, කෘතනාධිකාරී හා පරිවේණාධිපති විසින් විනය කඩවීම් පිළිබඳ කටයුතු කිරීම සඳහා අපකෂපාති විනය කමිටු ස්ථාපිත කිරීම හා ගුණාදනම් හා ශක්‍යතා වර්ධනය වන ආකාරයේ සුදුසු දැඩුවම් ක්‍රමයක් හඳුන්වාදීම.
- පිරිවෙන් මණ්ඩලය, අධ්‍යක්ෂ/පිරිවෙන් ශාඛාව, කෘතනාධිකාරී, පරිවේණාධිපති හිමි විසින් ළමා විය ඉක්මවා තුරුණු වියට එළඹෙන නිකුත් වන සේලා තුළ යහපත් වින්තනය හා ආකල්පමය පරිවර්තනයක් ඇති කර, නිකුත් පෞරුෂය ගොඩනැගීමට අවශ්‍ය පුහුණුවක් අනිවාර්ය කිරීම.
- පිරිවෙන් මණ්ඩලය, අධ්‍යක්ෂ/පිරිවෙන් ශාඛාව සමස්තය දැකිය හැකි පරිදි පිරිවෙන් නිකුත්වගේ බුද්ධිය වර්ධනය කිරීම සඳහා ව්‍යාපෘති සකස් කිරීම.
- පිරිවෙන් මණ්ඩලය, අධ්‍යක්ෂ/පිරිවෙන් ශාඛාව සෑම පිරිවේණාකට ම උපස්ථායකයෙකු (නිකුත් වන සේලාවේ වනාන්තර කිරීමට කැපකරු තනතුරක්) සැකසීම.

මූලික ක්ෂේත්‍රය 4: මානව සම්පත් සංවර්ධනය

මෙහෙයවීමේ මූලධර්ම

- මෙ.මු 1: පහතට අනුකූලව පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපනය සඳහා අවශ්‍ය අධ්‍යයන හා අනුගත කාර්ය මණ්ඩල බඳවා ගැනීම හා මවුන්ගේ හැකියාවන් වර්ධනය කිරීම පිරිවෙන් ශාඛාව විසින් සිදුකළ යුතු ය.
- මෙ.මු 2: ගුරුවරුන්ගේ දැනුම යාවත්කාලීන කිරීම හා ධාරිතා සංවර්ධනය මෙන්ම වෘත්තීය ගැටලු විසඳීම සඳහා අවශ්‍ය පියවර ගැනීම පිරිවෙන් මණ්ඩලය, කෘතනාධිකාරී හා පරිවේණාධිපති හිමිවරුන් විසින් සිදු කළ යුතු ය.

ප්‍රතිපත්ති යෝජනා හා උපාය මාර්ග

ප්‍රතිපත්තිය 4.1:

පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපනය නගා සිටුවීම සඳහා සුදුසු මානව සම්පත් සංවර්ධන ක්‍රියාකාරකම් හඳුන්වා දී ඒවා ක්‍රියාත්මක කිරීම සහ අඛණ්ඩ ධාරිතා සංවර්ධන වැඩසටහන් ක්‍රියාත්මක කිරීම

නිර්දේශිත උපාය මාර්ග

පරිවේණාචාර්යවරුන්

- පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපනයේ පරමාර්ථ සාධනය කිරීමට පදනම් වන ආකාරයෙන් සකස් කළ අනිවාර්ය පුහුණුවක් පිරිවෙන් ගුරුවරුන්ට ලබා දීම.
- සෑම උපාධිධාරී පරිවේණාචාර්යවරයෙකු විසින් ම පත්වීම අනුමතවීමේ සිට වසර 05ක් ඇතුළත අධ්‍යාපන ඩිප්ලෝමාව සම්පූර්ණ කිරීම අනිවාර්ය කළ යුතු ය.
- උක්ත අධ්‍යාපන ඩිප්ලෝමාව පූර්ණකාලීන වූවක් වේ නම්, ඒ වෙනුවෙන් වෙනත් ආචාර්යවරයෙකු අනුයුක්ත කළ යුතු අතර, අර්ධකාලීන වූවක් නම් දුර ප්‍රමාණය අනුව පාඨමාලාවේ දේශන පැවැත්වෙන සෑම සතියක ම දිනක් හෝ දින

දෙකක් රාජකාරී නිවාඩු ලබා දිය යුතු ය. ඊට අමතර ව, පාඨමාලා ගාස්තු අධ්‍යාපන අමාත්‍යාංශය විසින් දැරිය යුතු ය. එම ප්‍රතිලාභ ලබන ඕනෑම ආචාර්යවරයෙකු පාඨමාලාව අවසන් කිරීමෙන් පසුව අවම වශයෙන් වසර 05ක් වත් පිරිවෙන් ක්ෂේත්‍රයෙහිම සේවය කළ යුතු වන අතර, ඊට පෙර ඉවත් වන්නේ නම් පුහුණුව සඳහා රජය මගින් දැරූ මුදල ආපසු ගෙවා සේවයෙන් නිදහස්වීමට අවස්ථාව ලබා දිය යුතු ය. (පවතින තනතුරට වඩා ඉහළ තනතුරකට යාමේ දී එම කරුණ අදාළ නොවේ)

- ප්‍රාචීන මධ්‍යම උපාධියට පිරිවෙන්වල පත්වීම් අනුමත කෙරෙන හෙයින් එසේ බඳවාගන්නා ගුරුවරුන්ගේ වෘත්තීය නිපුණතා දීර්ග ගත්වීම සඳහා වසර 05ක් ඇතුළත ප්‍රාචීන අවසාන විභාගය හෝ පාලි හා සංස්කෘත විෂයයන් සහිත ව ශාස්ත්‍රවේදී (බාහිර) උපාධිය සම්පූර්ණ කිරීම අනිවාර්ය කිරීම.
- පාලි, සංස්කෘත, සිංහල හා ත්‍රිපිටක ධර්මය වැනි විෂයයන් ඉගැන්වීම සඳහා පැවැදි ආචාර්යවරුන් සඳහා නිරන්තරයෙන් ප්‍රමුඛතාව ලබා දීම සහ යාවත්කාලීන වන අධ්‍යාපන ශිල්ප ක්‍රමවලට අනුව පිරිවෙන් ගුරුවරුන්ගේ විෂය දැනුම යාවත්කාලීන කරගැනීමට නිසි වැඩපිලිවෙළක් සැකසීම හා ඒ සඳහා වැඩමුළු, සම්මන්ත්‍රණ හා පුහුණු සැසි ආදී අඛණ්ඩ අධ්‍යාපන වැඩසටහන් සංවිධානය කිරීම.
- යම් උපාධිධාරී පරිවේණිකවරයෙකු ගුරු පුහුණු වැඩසටහනකට (එක් අවුරුදු හෝ දූ අවුරුදු) සම්බන්ධ වන්නේ නම්, උන්වහන්සේ හෝ ඔහු වෙනුවෙන් අනුප්‍රාප්තිකයෙකු පත් කිරීමට අධ්‍යාපන අමාත්‍යාංශය ප්‍රතිපාදන සැපයිය යුතු වේ.
- පාරිවේණික ගුරු මාරු ක්‍රමයක් ඇතිකිරීම අත්‍යවශ්‍ය වන අතර, එය වඩාත් විනිවිදභාවයකින් සිදු කිරීමට පිරිවෙන් ගුරුවරු මාරු කිරීම සඳහා වන මණ්ඩලයක් ස්ථාපිත කළ යුතු ය. (කෘත්‍යාධිකාරී ස්වාමීන්වහන්සේගේ එකඟතාව හා සෑම පරිවේණිකවරයෙකුගේ ම අවශ්‍යතාව පරිදි අවුරුදු දහයකට වරක් මෙම ගුරු මාරුව සිදු කළ යුතු ය.)
- පරිවේණිකවරුන් නවීන තාක්ෂණය, නූතන භාෂා හා පශ්චාදී උපාධි පාඨමාලා හැදෑරීම සඳහා යොමු කිරීම කෙරෙහි දීර්ග කිරීම පිණිස ආධාර මුදල් හා පාඨමාලා ගාස්තු ලබා දීමේ වැඩපිලිවෙළක් සකස් කිරීම.
- ප්‍රාචීන උපාධිය සහ ශාස්ත්‍රවේදී උපාධිය ලබා නොමැති පරිවේණිකවරුන් තම පත්වීම අනුමතව වසර පහක් ඇතුළත පිරිවෙන් ගුරු අභ්‍යාස ආයතනයේ හෝ රජයේ ගුරු විද්‍යාලයක ගුරු සහතිකය හෝ ඊට සමාන පුහුණු සහතිකයක් ලැබිය යුතු ය.
- පිරිවෙන් තුළ ඉංග්‍රීසි, ගණිතය හා සෞන්දර්යය වැනි විෂයන් ඉගැන්වීම සඳහා අ.පො.ස. (උසස් පෙළ) විභාගය සමත්වීමේ සහතිකයන් බඳවා ගන්නා ලද ගුරුවරුන් විසින් වසර පහක් ඇතුළත ගුරු පුහුණු ඩිප්ලෝමාවක් හෝ උපාධියක් ලබා ගැනීම අනිවාර්ය කළ යුතු ය.

කෘත්‍යාධිකාරී ස්වාමීන් වහන්සේලා

- උපසම්පදාව ලබා වසර 05ක් වත් ඉක්මවා තිබීම අනිවාර්ය කිරීම.
- කෘත්‍යාධිකාරී තනතුරට හැකි සෑම අවස්ථාවක දී ම විභාගාධිපති හිමියන් පත් කිරීම.
- පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපනයේ පරමාර්ථ සාධනය කරගැනීමට අවශ්‍ය ආකාරයෙන් සකස් කළ අනිවාර්ය අඛණ්ඩ පුහුණුවක් කෘත්‍යාධිකාරී හිමිවරුන්ට ලබාදීම.
- නියෝජ්‍ය කෘත්‍යාධිකාරී තනතුරක් (කෘත්‍යාධිකාරී හිමියන්ගේ එකඟතාව හා අවශ්‍යතාව මත) ඇති කිරීම.

පරිවේණිකවරු ස්වාමීන් වහන්සේලා

- පරිපාලන පුහුණුව අඛණ්ඩව ලබාදීම.
- පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපනයේ පරමාර්ථ සාධනය කරගැනීමට අවශ්‍ය ආකාරයෙන් සකස් කළ අනිවාර්ය අඛණ්ඩ පුහුණුවක් පරිවේණිකවරුන්ට හිමිවරුන්ට ලබාදීම.
- පාසල් පද්ධතිය තුළ විදුහල්පතිවරුන්ට හිමි පහසුකම් පරිවේණිකවරුන්ට හිමිවරුන්ට ද ලබාදීම.

- පරිවේණිකව නතරව සඳහා විශේෂ දීමනාවක් පිරිවෙන් වර්ග අනුව වෙන් වෙන් වශයෙන් ලබා දීම.

ගුරු උපදේශක/විෂය අධ්‍යක්ෂ/සහකාර අධ්‍යාපන අධ්‍යක්ෂ/නියෝජ්‍ය අධ්‍යාපන අධ්‍යක්ෂ (පිරිවෙන්)/පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යක්ෂ

- අධ්‍යාපන අමාත්‍යාංශය හා පිරිවෙන් ශාඛාව මගින් අදාළ තනතුරු දේශපාලන මැදිහත්වීම්වලින් තොරව අධ්‍යාපන සුදුසුකම් හා වෘත්තීය පළපුරුද්ද ආදිය ඇගයීමට ලක්වන පිළිගත් ක්‍රමවේදයකට අනුව පත් කිරීමට අවශ්‍ය විධිවිධාන සැලසීම.
- පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපනයේ පරමාර්ථ සාධනය කරගැනීමට අවශ්‍ය ආකාරයෙන් සකස් කළ අනිවාර්ය අඛණ්ඩ පුහුණුවක් ලබාදීම.

විශේෂඥයන්

- අධ්‍යාපන අමාත්‍යාංශය, පිරිවෙන් මණ්ඩලය හා ජාතික අධ්‍යාපන ආයතන එක්ව විෂයමාලා සංවර්ධන අවශ්‍යතා හඳුනාගැනීම, වසර අටෙන් අටට විෂයමාලා යාවත්කාලීන කිරීම හා විෂය නිර්දේශ සකස් කිරීම.

මූලික ක්ෂේත්‍රය 5: භෞතික සම්පත් හා මූල්‍ය සම්පත්

මෙහෙයවීමේ මූලධර්ම

- මෙ.මු 1: පිරිවෙන් පවත්වාගෙන යාම සඳහා අවශ්‍ය භෞතික පහසුකම් වර්ධනය කිරීමට රජය පියවර ගත යුතු ය.
- මෙ.මු 2: එම භෞතික සම්පත් නඩත්තුව හා පවත්වාගෙන යාම සඳහා කටයුතු කිරීම පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යක්ෂ, කෘත්‍යාධිකාරී හා පරිවේණිකව හිමිවරුන් විසින් සිදු කළ යුතු ය.

ප්‍රතිපත්ති යෝජනා හා උපාය මාර්ග

ප්‍රතිපත්තිය 5.1: පිරිවෙන්වලට අවශ්‍ය භෞතික සම්පත් හා මූල්‍ය සම්පත් නිසි පරිදි ලබාදීම

නිර්දේශිත උපාය මාර්ග

- පිරිවෙන්හි භෞතික සම්පත් නඩත්තුව සඳහා යම් ආධාරයක් වාර්ෂිකව ලබාදීම.
- අධ්‍යාපන අමාත්‍යාංශය මගින් පිරිවෙන් ශාලා විධිමත් පරිදි ඉදිකරවීමට සහ පිරිවෙන් සඳහා අවශ්‍ය ඩෙස් පුටු ආදී භෞතික උපකරණ ලබාදීමට කටයුතු කිරීම.
- පිරිවෙන් ශිෂ්‍යයන්ගේ අධ්‍යාපන හා පෝෂණ අවශ්‍යතා වෙනුවෙන් ලබාදෙන ආධාරය වඩාත් ශක්තිමත් කිරීම.
- හික්ෂු විනය හා අනෙක් ගෞරවය ආරක්ෂා වන ආකාරයෙන් නේවාසිකාගාර පහසුකම් ලබාදීම.
- ප්‍රමාණවත් පංති කාමර, පුස්තකාල පහසුකම්, භාෂාගාර, පරිගණක විද්‍යාගාර, ගුරු විවේකාගාර හා සනීපාරක්ෂක පහසුකම් ලබාදීම.
- පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපනය සඳහා රජයේ වාර්ෂික අයවැය මගින් මූල්‍ය ප්‍රතිපාදන කලානුරූපීව සම්පාදනය.
- පිරිවෙන් සංවර්ධන ජාතික අරමුදලක් ස්ථාපිත කිරීම.

මූලික ක්ෂේත්‍රය 6: පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපන ක්‍රමය ප්‍රතිව්‍යුහගත කිරීම

මෙහෙයවීමේ මූලධර්ම

- මෙ.ම 1: අවුරුදු දහස් ගණනක සිට පැවත ගෙන එන පිරිවෙන් සම්ප්‍රදාය ආරක්ෂාකර ගනිමින් කාලීන අවශ්‍යතාවන්ට අනුරූපීව පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපනය ප්‍රතිව්‍යුහගත කිරීම රජය විසින් සිදු කළ යුතු ය.
- මෙ.ම 2: සිදුවන වෙනස්කම්වලට අනුරූපී ලෙස පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපන ක්‍රමය සකස් කිරීම පිරිවෙන් මණ්ඩලය හා අධ්‍යක්ෂ/පිරිවෙන් ශාඛාව විසින් සිදු කළ යුතු ය.

ප්‍රතිපත්ති යෝජනා හා උපාය මාර්ග

ප්‍රතිපත්තිය 6.1: ශිෂ්‍යයා වෙත දැනුම, ශික්ෂණය, පුහුණුව හා ශක්‍යතා යන සියල්ල ලැබෙන පරිදි පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපන ක්‍රමය ප්‍රතිව්‍යුහගත කිරීම

නිර්දේශිත උපාය මාර්ග

- පිරිවෙන් මණ්ඩලය, අධ්‍යක්ෂ පිරිවෙන් ශාඛාව මගින් නවක පැවිදි හෙරණුන් වහන්සේ මූලික පිරිවෙන් පිවිසීමට පෙර (ප්‍රාථමික) පිරිවෙන් අභ්‍යාස ආයතනයට ඇතුළත් කරවීම.
- පිරිවෙන් පනතේ දක්වා ඇති පිරිවෙන් අභ්‍යාස ආයතන (පනත 13 වගන්තිය) අතරින් දැනට පවත්වාගෙන යන අභ්‍යාස ආයතනවලට බාධාවක් නොවන පරිදි අරමුණු කිහිපයක් සඳහා කතිෂ්ඨ අභ්‍යාස ආයතන පිහිටුවීම. (බෞද්ධ භාවනා ක්‍රමවල යෙදීම, බුද්ධධර්මය සහ බෞද්ධ සංස්කෘතිය පතුරුවා හැරීම, බුද්ධධර්මය හා විනය පිළිබඳ දැනුමක් ලබාගැනීම ආදිය අරමුණු වේ.)
- දැනට ක්‍රියාත්මක පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපනයේ ව්‍යුහය වෙනස් කිරීම (ඇමුණුම් අංක 01)
 - ප්‍රාථමික අභ්‍යාස ආයතන පුහුණුව වසර 2 - (මූලික පැවිදි විනය, ලේඛන හා භාෂණ පුහුණුව)
 - මූලික පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපනය වසර 5 - (විෂයමාලාව ඉගැන්වීම හා ඇගයීම)
 - ද්විතියික (කතිෂ්ඨ) අභ්‍යාස ආයතන පුහුණුව - (භික්ෂු ජීවිතයට අදාළ ආකල්ප හා ශක්තින් වර්ධනය (භාවනා ධර්ම දේශනා පිරිත් දේශනා භික්ෂු විනය ආදිය) ත්‍රිපිටක අධ්‍යයනය, ඉංග්‍රීසි හෝ වෙනත් භාෂා පරිචය.
- අධ්‍යාපන අමාත්‍යාංශය, පිරිවෙන් මණ්ඩලය මගින් පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපනයට සුදුසු පරිදි නියාමනය කිරීම හා ඒ සඳහා කාලීන අවශ්‍යතාවන්ට ගැළපෙන පරිදි පනත සංශෝධනය කිරීම.
- විෂයමාලා සංවර්ධනය හා විෂය නිර්දේශ යාවත්කාලීන කිරීම.
- ද්වි භාෂා (සිංහල/ඉංග්‍රීසි) පිරිවෙන් ආයතනවල තත්ත්වය නංවාලීම.
- අංග සම්පූර්ණ පිරිවෙනකට අවශ්‍ය පහසුකම් නියමකොට ඵ්‍රබඳු පහසුකම් සහිත වූ පිරිවෙන් පමණක් අලුතින් ආරම්භ කිරීම.
- ජාතික අධ්‍යාපන කොමිෂන් සභාව, අධ්‍යාපන අමාත්‍යාංශය, ප්‍රාචීන භාෂෝපකාර සමාගම හා විභාග කොමසාරිස් විසින් මහ පිරිවෙන් ක්‍රියාත්මක වන ප්‍රාචීන භාෂෝපකාර සමාගමෙහි විභාග ශ්‍රී ලංකා යෝග්‍යතා මාර්ගෝපදේශයට

(SLQF) සම්බන්ධ කිරීම.

- පිරිවෙන් මණ්ඩලය, අධ්‍යක්ෂ/පිරිවෙන් ශාඛාව විසින් අධ්‍යාපන අමාත්‍යාංශයේ පිරිවෙන් ශාඛාව තුළ විවිධ විද්වතුන්ගෙන් සැදුම්ලත් තත්ත්ව පාලන ඒකකයක් (Quality Assurance Unit) ඇති කිරීම.
- පිරිවෙන් ශාඛාව මගින් පිරිවෙන් සම්බන්ධ අධ්‍යයන කේන්ද්‍රයක් ස්ථාපිත කිරීම.
- පිරිවෙන් මණ්ඩලය, අධ්‍යක්ෂ/පිරිවෙන් ශාඛාව මගින් අභ්‍යාස ආයතන සමස්ත භික්ෂු අධ්‍යාපනයේ උන්නතිය සඳහා යොමුකිරීම.
- පිරිවෙන් මණ්ඩලය, අධ්‍යක්ෂ/පිරිවෙන් ශාඛාව මගින් භික්ෂුන් වහන්සේලාට අනන්‍ය අධ්‍යාපනයක් සඳහා ධර්ම දේශනා, සජීව්‍යායනය, ගණ සජීව්‍යායනය, විහාර කළමනාකරණය, නායකත්ව පුහුණුව සහ භික්ෂු විනය සඳහා අත්‍යවශ්‍ය පුහුණුව ඇතුළත් භික්ෂුවගේ ජීවන නිපුණතා ප්‍රවර්ධනය කිරීමේ අභ්‍යාස ආයතනයක් පිහිටුවීම (පහතෙන් ඊට අවශ්‍ය ප්‍රතිපාදන දැනටමත් ලැබී තිබේ).
- පිරිවෙන් මණ්ඩලය, අධ්‍යක්ෂ/පිරිවෙන් ශාඛාව දේශීය හා ජාත්‍යන්තර ධර්ම ප්‍රචාරය සඳහා අවශ්‍යවන භාෂා දැනුම වැඩි දියුණු කිරීම සම්බන්ධ ධර්මදූත පුහුණු ව්‍යාපෘතියක් ක්‍රියාත්මක කිරීම.

මූලික ක්ෂේත්‍රය 7: දසසීල මාතෘකාවන්ගේ අධ්‍යාපනය

මෙහෙයවීමේ මූලධර්ම

මෙ.මු 1: සැමට සමාන අධ්‍යාපන සංකල්පය යටතේ දසසීල මාතෘකාවන්ගේ ද අධ්‍යාපන අයිතිය සුරක්ෂිත කිරීම රජයේ වගකීම වේ.

මෙ.මු 2: ඒ සඳහා වන ප්‍රතිපත්ති සම්පාදනය අධ්‍යාපන අමාත්‍යාංශය, බුද්ධ ශාසන අමාත්‍යාංශය, බෞද්ධ කටයුතු කොමසාරිස් හා සමස්ත ලංකා සිලමතා මහා සංගමය, ජාතික අධ්‍යාපන ආයතනය මගින් සිදු කළ යුතු ය.

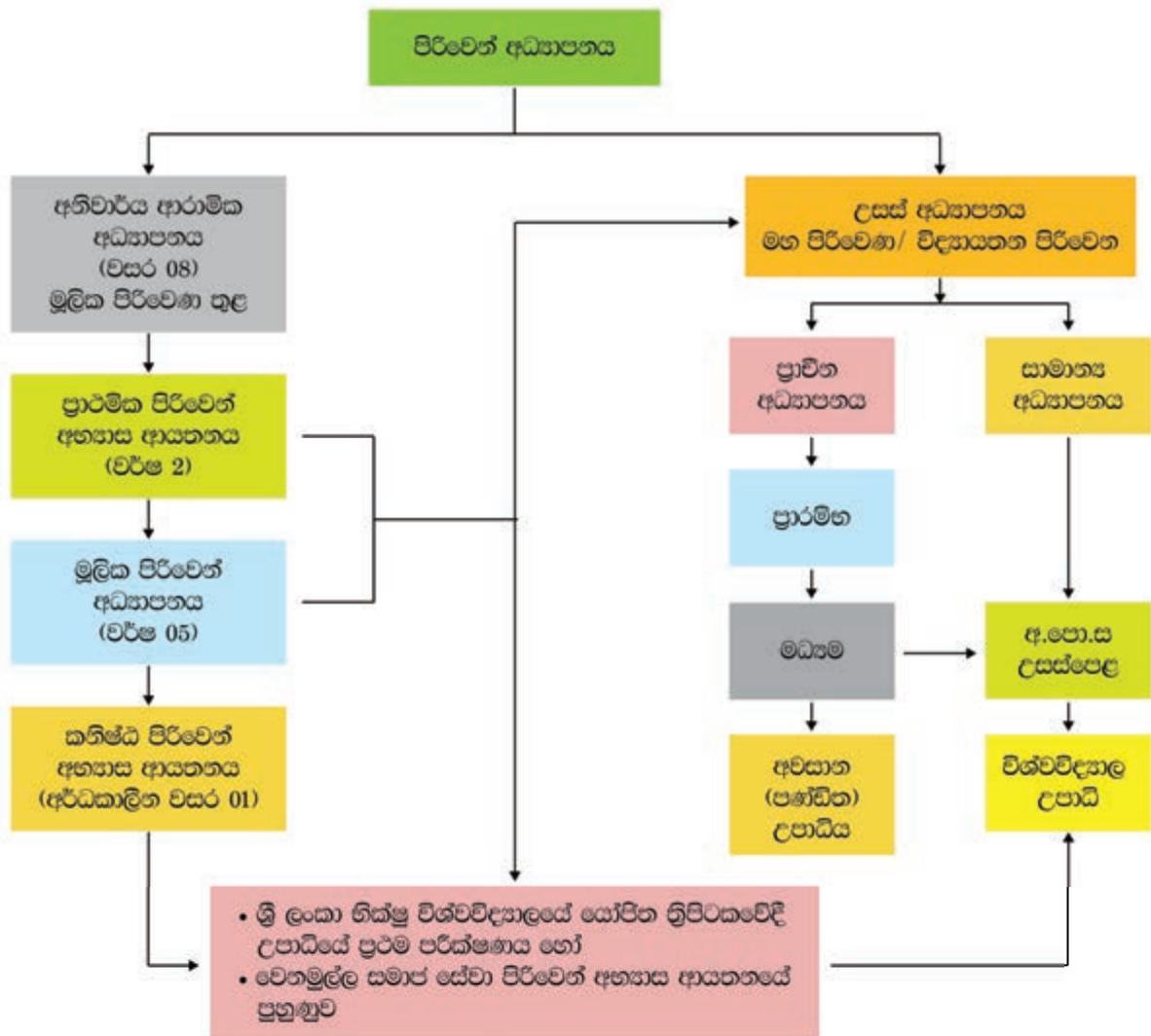
යෝජිත ප්‍රතිපත්ති යෝජනා හා උපාය මාර්ග

ප්‍රතිපත්තිය 7.1:

දසසීල මාතෘකාවන්ට අධ්‍යාපන අවස්ථා නිර්මාණය කිරීම

නිර්දේශිත උපාය මාර්ග

- අධ්‍යාපන අමාත්‍යාංශය, බුද්ධ ශාසන අමාත්‍යාංශය, බෞද්ධ කටයුතු කොමසාරිස් හා සමස්ත ලංකා දසසීල මාතෘකා මහා සංගමය හා ජාතික අධ්‍යාපන ආයතනය මගින් අධ්‍යාපනය ලැබිය යුතු වයසේ සිටින දසසීල මාතෘකාවන්ට සම අධ්‍යාපන අවස්ථා උදාකරදීම.
- ඔවුන්ගේ සමාජ තත්ත්වය තහවුරු කිරීම.
- අවම වශයෙන් පළාත් මට්ටමින් හෝ පහසුකම් සහිත සීල මාතෘකා අධ්‍යාපන ආයතන ආරම්භ කිරීම.
- අධ්‍යාපන සුදුසුකම් සහිත දසසීල මාතෘකාවන් හෝ ගුරුවරයන් එම ආයතනවල ආචාර්ය මණ්ඩලවලට පත්කිරීම.
- ඔවුන්ට අදාළ ගුරු පුහුණු ආදිය ලබාදීම.
- දසසීල මාතෘකා ආචාර්ය ධර්ම පද්ධතියක් නිර්මාණය කිරීම.



PART IV- VOLUME VI

**POLICY PROPOSALS AND
RECOMMENDED STRATEGIC
ACTIVITIES ON SPECIAL AND
INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**



1. STATUS REVIEW

1.1. Introduction

Special and inclusive education refers to two mutually inclusive approaches that facilitate learning of children who have difficulties in learning. Special education requires support beyond what is usually offered in the regular school for children with Special Educational Needs (SENs). The learning approaches are designed specifically to respond to the learning needs of an individual with disabilities regardless of their environment, whether in a classroom, home, or hospital. On the other hand, the inclusive education is an approach to educating children with disabilities and learning difficulties with normal ones in the same setting. Inclusive education offers a child with special educational needs the right to enrol in his/her local mainstream school and be supported to reach their academic and social potential by providing all students, including those with severe disabilities, equitable opportunities to receive effective educational services, with supplementary aids and supportive services as needed, in age-appropriate general education classes in their neighbourhood schools, towards the outcome of preparing all students for productive lives as fully functioning members of the society.

Special education in Sri Lanka has a long history. The first school for students with disabilities was established in 1912 for catering to deaf and blind children. Later on, it was expanded to cater the children with other categories of disabilities. Since then, more than 27 special schools for children with disabilities have been established and operated in the country. Sri Lanka accepted the policy of integration in 1969, and since then students with disabilities have been integrated into regular schools by establishing special education units. Sri Lankan general education sector has adopted the principles of inclusion to develop a dynamic educational approach that responds to students' diversity after becoming a signatory to the SALAMANCA Statement in 1994. Besides that, non-governmental organizations also have taken a prominent place in giving education to children with disabilities. Parallel to this, private schools also have implemented educational programmes for children with special educational needs.

Currently, most of the regulatory powers related to the provision of the special and inclusive services are derived through the Special Educational Society Act No. 3 of 1999, which covers the rehabilitation of disabled individuals by providing educational service, while the General Educational Reforms proposed by NEC (1997) covers the inclusion of children who have disabilities in ordinary classrooms. Further, most of the services offered in special and inclusive education have been provided based on administrative circulars and general education policy statements. However, the above stated Acts, policies, and administrative circulars do not go far enough to cater to the needs of providing satisfactory educational opportunities for children with special education needs.

As a prelude to the formulation of policy proposals and recommended strategic activities, a comprehensive review of the current status including the identification of issues and gaps was undertaken. The detailed version of the Status Review is given in the full text of NEPF (2020-2030) and a summary version of the Status Review with emphasis on key issues and gaps, is presented herewith under the following sub-headings; i) current statistics, ii) identification services for children at risk, iii) identification and assessment of children with special needs for an appropriate placement, iv) learning environment, human and physical resources, v) curriculum, instructions, and assessment, vi) financing in special education vii) governance and management, and quality assurance, viii) data and research

1.2. Salient Features and Key Issues and Gaps

1.2.1. Current statistics

There has been no formal system in place to screen children and identify the children with disabilities and do the referrals, and also to document and collate data at the provincial and national level, and as such it has been very difficult to estimate the exact number of children with disabilities in Sri Lanka. UNICEF (2016) reported that in Sri Lanka approximately about 23.5% of children who are with disabilities in the aged group of 5-14 years were excluded from mainstream education, and amongst those who do attend mainstream schools, participation in educational activity reduces with age; around 55.4% of the disabled population in the age of 15-19 years, and 86% of the disabled population in the age of 20-24 years do not engage in any form of educational activity or vocational training.

As of 2018 data, there were 48,784 children with special education needs attending regular schools; out of this, 24,518 children (1.5%) with special education needs were among the 1,672,350 total population of children in Grade 1-5 (*primary classrooms*), and 24,266 children (1.0%) with special educational needs were among 2,535,634 total population of children in Grade 6 -13 (*in regular junior, senior and upper senior secondary schools in Sri Lanka*). In addition, there are 7,513 students with special education needs accommodated in 704 special education units functioning in national and provincial schools. In addition, there are 2,467 children with special education needs receiving care and education in 29 assisted special schools that are maintained by the State (3) and the non-State organizations (26).

1.2.2. Early identification services for children at risk

Early intervention is the best way to support the development and well-being of children with disabilities, developmental delays, or other additional needs. It can help children to develop the skills they need to take part in everyday activities. Early intervention is well known to be effective and productive in helping these children in educational achievement and to realize their full potential and become productive adults in the future. If neglected, the right to education is violated and they may remain unproductive and become a burden to their parents, society, and the country.

Even though there is a sound primary healthcare service to cater for pre-and perinatal care of children including the provision of vaccinations, nutritional supplements like *Thripasha* for children who are underweight, and monitoring the growth and development of the children, a well-coordinated referral system does not appear to be in operation to deal with a child if that child is diagnosed/identified as disabled. This referral system should be effectively integrated with the primary care services provided through the Medical Officer of Health (MoH) system. Moreover, specialized services which are essential for the well-being of disabled children do not exist at present in Sri Lanka. Further, children with disabilities under the age of 5 are not registered nationally as there is no formal registration system, and hence they are therefore excluded from social protection mechanisms that may be available to assist them. Under these circumstances, most children with disabilities are kept at home without being exposed to society. However, it is imperative such children should be identified through the village level officers such as Midwives, Gramaniladari, or Social Service officers at the earliest possible time for necessary interventions. Research studies in this aspect overwhelmingly highlighted the need for strengthening the institutional capacity at every level to identify and then respond to issues specifically concerning children with disabilities.

1.2.3. Identification and assessment of children with special needs for appropriate placement

Presently, in Sri Lanka, children with special needs are receiving their education either in special schools, in special units of schools, or in the mainstream of general education system of government or private schools. However, Sri Lanka has failed so far to come up with a systematic programme to provide a suitable placement for children with special needs to allow them to get an education in the least restrictive environment according to their needs.

Referral procedures are mainly facilitated through informal channels, and very often there are no official records of referrals. This situation raises many issues in providing the facilities and supportive services needed to enhance the learning effectiveness of children with special needs such as curriculum adaptations, alternative evaluations, assistive technologies, trained teachers, transition, etc. Regarding the children with disabilities who are out of school, many have raised concerns about admission to special units in regular schools. A research study into this area has reported as high as 35 % of parents/caregivers were denied access to such schools.

Despite Sri Lanka's high school enrolment rate, many children with disabilities do not attend schools. According to school administrators, many children with disabilities are kept away from schools due to two main factors, namely the unavailability of qualified teachers to deal with such students and the lack of parents' awareness regarding the educational facilities available for such children. Though there is a systematic procedure to identify the entry competencies of children when they are admitted to grade one as an outcome of the 1997 Educational Reforms in Sri Lanka, it does not appear to operate fully. According to this approach, at the point of entry of a child into a school, the teacher is expected to engage children in a series of specially designed play items and activities to identify each child's capabilities at entry. This will enable teachers to assess the degree of success achieved and to take corrective measures where necessary. Nonetheless, still at present in most schools, many children who are identified to have low competency levels remain in the regular classroom without referring for further appraisals and/or providing proper interventions. Thus, there is a need for adopting an alternative approach to address the above issues. One such approach is the adoption of the Response to Intervention Model⁵ which proposes how to deal with the students at risk in schools once they are identified for poor learning outcomes, such as monitoring student progress, providing evidence-based interventions, and adjusting the intensity and nature of those interventions depending on a student's responsiveness.

1.2.4. Learning environment, and human and physical resources

1.2.4.1. Learning environment

It is well recognized that a disability can never be a deficiency, and it happens so when society fails to create a favourable environment for them to learn and progress. A positive and conducive learning environment for children can be created by a teacher in the classroom only when he/she respects his/her students, and arrange/provide learning experiences for children to meet their expectations and accomplish realistic goals. Teachers must never put up an attitude of inequality before the students, especially those who are disabled. They must rather create an inclusive environment in the classroom in which all students feel at home, gather in self-confidence, and be able to develop their innate talents. According to many research studies, teachers face stress or dilemmas when balancing classes to meet the needs of all students with and without SENs. Further, there were snags in coordination between teachers of regular classes and special units. Negative attitudes towards special education have increased the stress among teachers who are serving those units. A research study that examined the experiences of children with disabilities, their parents, and teachers at the special education units in three government schools in Central Province concluded that impairment-centered views regarding disabilities expressed by both teachers and parents dominated the learning environments in these schools.

1.2.4.2. Human resources

One of the main difficulties in implementing inclusive education is that the teachers in general education system receive insufficient training during their pre-service training phase to work in complex teaching contexts and

5. *The Response to Intervention (RTI) "model refers to a process that highlights how well students respond to changes in instruction in the classroom. Individual students' progress is monitored and results are used to make decisions about further instruction and intervention. Essentially, schools can use the RTI process to help students who are struggling academically or behaviourally and to identify students who may have learning disabilities."*

to respond to the unique needs of all the pupils in their classroom. In Sri Lanka, the number of pupils with SENs studying in general educational settings has gradually increased each year. In 2018, as of the Annual School Census Report, about 48,784 pupils who are identified as having SENs attended regular schools. The staffing shortfall of SEN teachers catering for the needs of students with SENs is approximately 36%. Even though a significant number of trained teachers in special education are produced by the National Colleges of Education (NCoEs), the Special Education Branch of the MoE does not have the leverage on their deployment due to the normal teacher deployment procedure followed by the Teacher Establishment Division of the MoE. As such, most primary school teachers in Sri Lanka are not adequately trained to teach children with special needs in a regular classroom, and many research studies emphasized the need of mandatory teacher training on inclusive education strategies to use adaptations and accommodations for students with special educational needs. It also emphasized that more training programmes and professional discourses are needed to be introduced on inclusive education philosophy and strategies that would help to reinforce teachers' professional ideas of accepting students with special education needs. Also, changes are needed in the pre-service teacher training curriculum in Sri Lanka regarding children with special education needs.

1.2.4.3 Physical resources

According to Disabled Persons' Accessibility Regulation No. 01 (2006)⁶ all new constructions, renovations, and modifications of public buildings and transport must be done in conformity with the prescribed accessibility guidelines, and all existing public buildings must be made accessible to people with disabilities. Protection of Rights of Individuals with Disabilities Act No. 28 of 1996 mentioned that it is the responsibility of school building engineers, principals, and education authorities to provide facilities for children with SENs to have access to all schools, classrooms, principal's office, library, playground, laboratories, sanitary places, etc. But the research into this area has highlighted that at the design stage of the school buildings, in most instances the building designs and plans do not give adequate priority for disability access. As such most existing school buildings do not provide access facilities to children with disabilities. Moreover, there is a dearth of assistive devices which facilitate access to the curriculum and teaching-learning process for children with special educational needs.

1.2.5. Curriculum, instructions, and assessments

In Sri Lanka, the school curriculum is centrally designed, and it mostly emphasizes knowledge transfer, and as a result, the examinations are also too much content-oriented rather than success-oriented. Research into this area has emphasized the need for strengthening special education by creating inclusive schools in Sri Lanka and recommended the adoption of inclusive instructional methodologies to support the curriculum across Grades 1-13 and across all subject areas. Even though there have been several initiatives taken by the Department of Inclusive Education of the National Institute of Education in terms of training in-service advisors and school principals regarding curriculum adaptation for children with special educational needs, this approach has not yet been widely adopted and expanded in school levels.

One of the well-accepted approaches in promoting flexibility in school curricula and teaching-learning is the Universal Design for Learning⁷ (UDL) approach, and it offers flexibility in adopting the prescribed curricula, and teaching and learning methods to suit different circumstances and types of learners in such a way to provide equal opportunities for them to succeed. This approach also offers flexibility in the ways students access material, engage with it, and show what they know. The purpose of UDL implementation is to create expert learners; learners who

6. Ministry of Social Services and Social Welfare. (17 October 2006). Protection of the right of Persons with Disabilities Act No. 28 of 1996. *The Gazette of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka (Extra Ordinary)*, No. 1467/15.

7. Universal design for learning (UDL) is a teaching approach that works to accommodate the needs and abilities of all learners and eliminates unnecessary hurdles in the learning process. This means developing a flexible learning environment in which information is presented in multiple ways, students engage in learning in a variety of ways, and students are provided options when demonstrating their learning.

can assess their own learning needs, monitor their progress and regulate and sustain their interest, effort, and persistence during a learning task.

Besides that, as highlighted by research studies, there are no special assessment strategies or procedures designed for the students with SENs in the mainstream. Therefore, most of the teachers in Sri Lanka are unable to cater to the individual needs of students with disabilities when conducting assessments. Moreover, the large and overcrowded classrooms have become barriers to addressing the needs of children with special needs in an effective manner.

1.2.6. Financing of special and inclusive education

It is very conceivable that every school/education institution that provides inclusive and special education is required to have sufficient financial provisions to provide facilities like barrier-free classrooms, acquire assistive devices and acquire/create learning resources for children with SENs. However, as reported by several research studies, there is still a gross inadequacy of facilities and resources required by schools to accommodate children with SENs. This situation appears to have arisen due to the existing method of fund allocation which is based more on the previous year's expenditure rather than on the actual needs. The current level of financial provisions made by the central government and provincial councils adopting this method appears to be hardly sufficient to meet these additional needs.

1.2.7. Governance and management, and quality assurance

The Education Service in Sri Lanka is administrated by the Ministry of Education of Central Government in liaison with Provincial Councils. The provisions of the Education Ordinance No.31 of 1939 (*as amended by Ordinance Nos. 61 of 1939, 21 of 1945, 3 of 1946, 26 of 1947, Act No 5 of 1951, 43 of 1943, 37 of 1958*), which governs the general education also covers to some extent the aspects special and inclusive education. Apart from these historical legislative dictates, there is no legislation specific to governing the provision of education to students with disabilities even though, Sri Lanka has ratified almost all international, global declarations that cover special and inclusive education. Currently, the governance and management special and inclusive education has been supported by the general education-specific legislative enactments and policy directives, and through related administrative circulars, and these do not go far enough to address the specific needs of children with special educational needs. Thus, there is a pressing need for the enactment of a legislative Act/Ordinance and accompanying regulations, and adopting a national policy and strategic activity framework with clear delineation of the roles and functions of key agencies, and to ensure the provision of required funds, human and physical resources, and for effective coordination among key agencies and implementation and monitoring of special and inclusive education programmes.

It is well recognized that a well-formulated Quality Assurance (QA) mechanism forms an integral component of the governance and management of education. However, the QA in general education that is conducted through the Quality Assurance Unit of the Ministry of Education does not give sufficient weightage for special and inclusive education. Therefore, there is a need to incorporate QA aspects of the special and inclusive education in the QA framework that is in operation for general education, thus making a common QA framework for both general education and special and inclusive education.

1.2.8. Data management and research

There is a dearth of data and information about persons with disabilities, and this is particularly so concerning children with special education needs. There appears to be no proper data management system in operation for special and inclusive education in Sri Lanka, and as such, there is no account on the number of children with disabilities and the needs of individuals with disabilities in Sri Lanka. The extent of research information generated in the field of special and inclusive education in Sri Lanka is also minimal. Even though there are few research studies in the field of special and inclusive education conducted by several organizations and individuals, there is no common

forum to disseminate the research findings. Further, the shortage of information on individuals with disabilities and their scope of needs has made planning in special and inclusive education a difficult challenge.

1.3. Conclusion

According to the limited research findings in the field of special and inclusive education, there exist many lingering issues and gaps that hinder the progressive development of facilities and improvements in the quality and standards of educational services provided to children with SENs. These include limitations in access to early childhood and regular education system, learning facilities, curricula, and teaching-learning process, human resources, physical resources, financing, governance and management, quality assurance, data management, and research. The primary reason for most of the identified issues and gaps is the absence of a national level legislative Act or Ordinance specific to the provision of education and allied services to children with special education needs and accompanying regulations that give effect to the provisions of such an Act/Ordinance. This situation has further been aggravated by the absence of comprehensive and consistent national policy which shall define sectoral policies, roles and functions of key agencies, and policy directives and accompanied strategic activities, and implementation framework to give an effect to those policies and strategies. Thus, there is a pressing need for enactment of legislative Act/Ordinance and accompanying regulations, and adopting a national policy and strategic activity framework to define the roles and functions of key agencies, and to ensure the provision of required funds, human and physical resources, and effective coordination among key agencies and implementation and monitoring of special and inclusive education programmes.

2. POLICY PROPOSALS AND RECOMMENDED STRATEGIC ACTIVITIES

Having completed a comprehensive Status Review, the policy planning team has proceeded to identify special and inclusive education sector-specific 10 core areas and elements and frame accompanying directive principles based on the guidelines elaborated in Part III of the NEPF (2020-2030). This approach is taken, as stated elsewhere, to ensure the policy planning process gives comprehensive coverage across the sub-sector specific core areas and elements while giving due consideration to issues and gaps highlighted in the Status Review that are lingering the progressive developments of the special and inclusive education sector.

The special and inclusive education sector-specific 10 core areas include: i) Access for Children with Special Education Needs to Early Childhood Care and Education; ii) Access for Children with Special Education Needs to Regular Education System; iii) Learners and Learning Environment; iv) Curriculum and Teaching-Learning Process; v) Quality of Human Resources; vi) Quality of Physical Resources; vii) Financing of Special and Inclusive Education; viii) Regulation, and Governance and Management; ix) Quality Assurance; and x) Data Management and Research.

Core Area – SE & IE 1: Access for Children with Special Education Needs to Early Childhood Care and Education

Directive principle

DP 1: The State assures universal access to early childhood education irrespective of race, religion, socio-economic status, and disabilities.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-SE & IE 1.1: Early identification, assessment, and intervention services should be nationally available for the children at risk to ensure their well-being and facilitate the attainment of their potential

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The Ministry of Health shall take steps to establish a Network of Child Development Intervention Centres (CDICs) at the provincial level with proper link to national level hospitals such as Lady Ridgway Hospital to facilitate early identification and provisions of needy interventions. The CDICs should be served by a Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) consisting of Paediatricians, Psychologists, Audiologists, Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, and Midwives.
 - Core functions of the CDICs are to; i) conduct screening of children at risk for diagnosis and provide interventions, ii) conduct continuous monitoring of the progress of children at risk for prescribed interventions, iii) design and conduct educational programmes to promote the adoption of best practices by the parents, other family members, and caregivers, and iv) provisions of guidance and counselling to families of children with SENs.
- The Ministry of Health should establish a national level Advisory Board under the chairmanship of the Director General of Health with representatives of the Ministries of Education and Social Services and Welfare, Provincial Ministries of Health, National Secretariate for Early Childhood Development (NSECD), and Child Protection Authority to provide directions and guidance to and review and monitor the progress achieved through the network of CDICs.
- The Ministry of Social and Welfare Services shall take steps to review the existing Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) programmes with respect to structure, resources, and linkages with other relevant agencies and introduce appropriate reforms to make it functional and effective.

Policy-SE & IE 1.2: Children with special education needs should be included in early childhood care and development programmes in a manner conducive for such children in achieving the fullest possible social inclusion and individual development

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The NSECD, in liaison with the Non-Formal and Special Education (NF & SE) Branch of the Ministry of Education, shall take steps to ensure the enrolment of children with SENs who can cope with normal children into Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Centres/Facilities.
- The NF & SE Branch of the Ministry of Education working in liaison with the National Institute of Education (NIE) and provincial authorities shall take steps to ensure provisions of appropriate preschool programmes to prepare those children with special education needs to enrol in special education units maintained by the regular school system.
- The NSECD, together with the NF & SE Branch of the Ministry of Education shall facilitate the NIE in the development of the curriculum, guidelines on curricular adaptation, and instructional material to cater for

the needs of children with disabilities enrolled in early childhood development programmes.

- The NSECD, together with the NF & SE Branch of the Ministry of Education shall promote and facilitate the NIE, Open University of Sri Lanka, National Colleges of Education (NCoEs), and any other established universities to design and conduct education and training programmes to train teachers/teacher assistants/caregivers in sufficient numbers required to deal with children with special education needs.

Core Area – SE & IE 2: Access for Children with Special Education Needs to Regular Education System

Directive Principle

DP 1: The State assures full equity and inclusion in education where need-based support is available to all students with disabilities to thrive within the education system, regardless of gender, race, religion or social status, geographical location.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-SE & IE 2.1: All children with special educational needs and talents in Sri Lanka should be subjected to an assessment conducted by health care professionals for determining the eligibility for special and inclusive education services and placement decisions

Recommended Strategic Activities

- All Provincial Ministries of Education shall take steps to establish Special Education Assessment Committees (SEACs) at Zonal Education Office level to determine appropriate placements of children with SENs for educational interventions based on the assessment reports made by the Provincial Ministry of Health through the Multi-Disciplinary Teams of the CDICs.
- The SEAC at the Zonal Education Office level should consist of the following representatives:
 - i. Director of Education/Deputy Director of Education/Assistant Director of Education in charge of the subject of Special Education
 - ii. Director of Education/Deputy Director of Education/Assistant Director of Education in charge of the subject of Primary Education
 - iii. In-Service Advisor in Special Education/In-Service Advisor in Primary Education or a senior teacher of Special Education
- School authorities shall take steps as and when required to refer those children who may encounter learning difficulties to the Zonal Education Office and CDICs for necessary interventions.
- The MoE and NIE together with the Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education and Zonal Education Authorities shall take steps to provide provisions for students who demonstrate excellent potential or outstanding performance to take up courses of higher grades and sit for higher examinations after being

evaluated and confirmed their giftedness by the Multi-Disciplinary Team of the CDIC (*functioning at the level of Provincial Ministry of Health*).

Core Area – SE & IE 3: Learners and Learning Environment

Directive principle

DP 1: Education should pave the way for every individual irrespective of his/her disability, to reach the full potential to make him/her productively employable/engaged in the 'world of work'.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-SE & IE 3.1: All children who are eligible for special and inclusive education in Sri Lanka should be ensured appropriate learning opportunities at the least restrictive environment which facilitates their holistic development

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The MoE and Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education together with the Zonal Education Authorities shall take steps to issue circular instruction to ensure the school management of all schools take steps to form special education support teams in individual schools or for a cluster of schools.
- School management of all schools shall take steps to engage families of children with SENs and the community in meaningful and mutually beneficial ways to promote each student's academic success and well-being irrespective of any disabilities that they are faced with.
- School management of every school shall take steps to establish an Action Team for Partnerships (ATP). ATP shall consist of parents, representatives from School Development Societies/Boards, Past Pupils' Associations, and Voluntary or Welfare Institutions that provide special facilities to fulfil the needs of children with SENs. ATP in liaison with the respective *Grama Niladhari*, Community Police, Divisional Secretariat, etc., shall work towards protecting children with SENs from all forms of maltreatment and abuses.
- The Provincial and Zonal education authorities should take steps to ensure schools catering for the children with SENs are allocated teachers with the required expertise to deal with such children and provided with required resources.
- The MoE shall take steps to ensure existing Teacher Training Centres coming under the purview of the Commissioner of Colleges of Education provide necessary advocacy and training regularly for teachers handling children with SENs.

Core Area – SE & IE 4: Curriculum and Teaching-Learning Process

Directive principle

DP 1: All students, irrespective of disabilities, must be guaranteed 13 years of school education.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-SE & IE 4.1: All schools irrespective of the type and affiliations should facilitate all students irrespective of disabilities to complete their primary and secondary education and facilitate a smooth transition for tertiary education and/or to the world of work

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The MoE working with the Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education and Zonal Education Authorities shall take steps to issue a certificate of completion of schooling by the respective schools to children with SENs to facilitate them to link with the world of work.
- The MoE working with the UGC shall take steps to facilitate enrolment of eligible students with SENs in study programmes in universities, especially for non-professional study programmes, coupled with provisions for special accommodation facilities, accessibility to learning facilities, special teaching aids, and assistive devices.
- The Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC), working with all technical and vocational education and training institutions, shall take steps to accommodate children with SENs into appropriate technical and vocational education training programmes.
- The National Council for Person with Disabilities (NCPD) shall take steps to provide special grants to special and regular schools, universities, and TVET institutions that accommodate children with SENs to facilitate provisions of required facilities.
- The NCPD in liaison with relevant authorities shall take steps to put in place legal and administrative regulatory mechanisms to prevent employers from excluding prospective employees purely based on their disabilities.

Policy-SE & IE 4.2: All schools irrespective of the type and affiliations should provide a quality education through appropriate curricula adaptations, organizational arrangements, teaching strategies, and resource use to develop the learning abilities of children and young persons with special education needs

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The NF & SE Branch of the MoE shall prescribe the guidebooks for parents for preparing children with SENs

to commence primary education.

- The NIE shall take steps to provide flexibility into the school curriculum and provide guidelines to adapt the prescribed curriculum appropriately according to the needs of children with SENs.
- The NIE in collaboration with teacher training centres shall take steps to conduct training programmes for teachers, in-service advisors (ISAs), and principals to update their knowledge and skills about special and inclusive education and on how to adapt the age-appropriate curricula for teaching and training of children with SENs.
- The MoE and NIE together with the Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education shall take steps to create a learning environment in all schools that allow learners to engage in learning through multiple means of representation, actions, and expression and engagement, based on the principles of Universal Design for Learning approach.
- The MoE, NIE, and the Department of Examinations (DoE) together with the Provincial Ministries of Education/Provincial Departments of Education and Zonal Education Authorities shall take steps to ensure that the schools adopt evaluation procedures for children with SENs based on the recommendation of the Education Evaluation Committee of the Ministry of Education according to the needs of students at school and national level assessments, including the introduction of alternative assessment methods, providing additional time and appropriate specialized assistance (*such as sign language, scribes, readers, etc.*)
- The MoE and NIE together with the Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education and Zonal Education Authorities shall take steps to ensure all schools have access to the equipment and assistive devices required for teaching and learning for the children with SENs.

Core Area – SE & IE 5: Quality of Human Resources

Directive principle

DP 1: The State ensures the adequacy of pre-service and in-service trained teachers for special and inclusive education.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-SE & IE 5.1: All teachers and support personnel dealing with children with special education needs must be well trained, recognized and rewarded

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The NIE and universities shall ensure the curricula of all pre-service and in-service training programmes are revised and aligned to include special and inclusive education teaching-learning practices prescribed by the Universal Design for Learning approach, and also to include aspects such as collaborative and co-operative teaching, curriculum adaptation, differentiated instructions, alternative evaluation methods and tools, assistive technology enhancement, augmentative alternative communication, etc.
- The MoE together with the Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education shall take steps to make it

mandatory for all teachers to undergo continuing professional development programmes with compulsory modules on special and inclusive education.

- The NF & SE Branch of the MoE shall liaise with universities, institutes of higher education, institutes of teacher education, and other training providers to design and offer programmes/courses leading to graduate/diploma/certificate level qualifications on special and inclusive education.
- The MoE and Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education shall take steps to ensure all the existing Teacher Training Centres and Teacher Centres coming under their purview to provide a dedicated space for the establishment of resource centres for the continuing professional development of teachers in special and inclusive education.
- The MoE together with the Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education and Zonal Education Authorities shall design and introduce an appraisal scheme to recognize the teachers who cater to children with SENs and reward them appropriately.

Core Area – SE & IE 6: Quality of Physical Resources

Directive principle

DP 1: All education institutions must be equipped with the required infrastructure facilities and teaching resources and aids to cater to students with SENs.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-SE & IE 6.1: All education institutions should ensure that their physical facilities are constructed in a manner that facilitates the accessibility of children with disabilities

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The MoE and the Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education and the Zonal Education Authorities shall ensure the national and provincial schools coming under their purview strictly adhere to the prescribed guidelines issued by the Department of Social Services and Welfare (*through the Gazette Notification 1467/15 of 2006*) while giving due consideration to Eight Goals of Universal Design and Accessibility Continuum (CAST, 2018) in designing school buildings to ensure accessibility of children with disabilities.
- School Management of all schools, both national and provincial level, shall ensure that the existing physical infrastructure facilities are modified suitably to cater to the needs of learners with SENs.
- The MoE and the Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education shall take steps to include the compliance of the schools with the guidelines issued by the Department of Social Services and Welfare (*through Gazette Notification of 1467/15 of 2006*) and the Eight Goals of Universal Design and Accessibility Continuum as one of the criteria in the school monitoring system.

Core Area – SE & IE 7: Financing of Special and Inclusive Education

Directive principle

DP 1: The State guarantees free education from kindergarten to university education irrespective of disability, geographical location, and ethnicity.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-SE & IE 7.1: Children with special educational needs should be provided with necessary support services and facilities in schools at no cost to parents

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The MoE and the Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education and Zonal Education Authorities shall take steps to ensure all schools offering services for SENs are resourced with equipment related to information and communication, and assistive technology required to cater for children with disabilities.
- The State shall take steps to provide tax incentives in the importation of assistive devices required for children with SENs.
- The MoE and the Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education and Zonal Education Authorities shall take steps to give recognition for the differential needs of funding for the students with SENs in the annual budgeting process and make special allocations over and above the regular funding to meet the cost of additional needs.

Core Area – SE & IE 8: Regulation, and Governance and Management

Directive principle

DP 1: The State is committed to ensuring quality and sustainable services for children with special education needs by enacting an appropriate legislative framework and strengthening the governance and management system at central, provincial, and school levels.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-SE & IE 8.1: Regulation, governance, and management of special and inclusive education services shall be ensured by enacting appropriate legal enactment, improving governance and management of key agencies, and coordination among key partners at all levels while strengthening the delivery of services at the school level

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The MoE in liaison with the Legal Draftsman Department and Social Services Department shall take steps to design and introduce a legislative framework by enacting a suitable legislative Act (*such as the Special and Inclusive Education Act*) to provide the legal framework to enforce the regulations to cater for the educational needs of differently-abled children.
- The MoE and Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education shall take steps to establish Advisory/ Consultative Committees on Special and Inclusive Education at the central and provincial levels by inviting scholars and experts, parents/guardians, delegates of related institutions and groups providing assistance to children with SENs to advise, guide, and facilitate the development and implementation of appropriate special and inclusive education services at all levels.
- The MoE and Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education shall take steps to monitor and implementation of the special and inclusive education programmes and services provided by the Zonal Education Office and at school levels.
- The MoE together with the Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education and Zonal Education Office shall take steps to expand the network of Special Education Units to ensure equitable distribution of such units across the school system and make them resourceful by providing trained personnel, assistive devices, and dedicated physical resources suitable for children with SENs.
- The MoE in liaison with the Ministry of Health, Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education and Health, and the Department of Social Services shall take steps to establish Resource Centres for Children with SENs at the Divisional Education Office level.

Core Area – SE & IE 9: Quality Assurance in Special and Inclusive Education

Directive principle

DP1: The State is committed to improving the quality and standards of services provided for children with special education needs by institutionalizing an appropriate quality assurance system

Policies and Strategies

Policy-SE & IE 9.1: Quality and standards of education and services provided to children with special education needs by the school system shall be monitored by the quality assurance system in general education implemented by the Ministry of Education

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The NF & SE Branch of the MoE in the liaison with the National Education Commission (NEC) and the Quality Assurance Unit of the MoE shall take steps to develop criteria, standards, and best practices for special education units, resource centres, and assisted special schools.
- The NF & SE Branch and Quality Assurance Units of the MoE in collaboration with the Provincial Ministries/ Departments of Education, shall take steps to introduce the quality assurance framework, criteria, standards, and best practices to special education units, resource centres, and assisted special schools to facilitate the institutionalization of quality culture.
- The Quality Assurance Unit of the MoE shall take steps to include special and inclusive education into their regular quality assurance process.

Core Area – SE & IE 10: Data Management and Research on Special and Inclusive Education

Directive principle

DP 1: Policies and interventions for the special and inclusive education sector should be made based on data and evidence.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-SE & IE 10.1: Promote research and data management on special and inclusive education for making evidence-based policy decisions and development plans

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The NF & SE Branch of the MoE shall maintain an up-to-date database on children with SENs with the collaboration of the following ministries and departments:
 - Ministry of Health
 - School Census Department of Ministry of Education
 - Census and Statistics Department

- Registrar General's Department
 - Department of Social Services
 - Other relevant organizations
- The NF & SE Branch of the MoE shall take steps to annually published Statistical Bulletins which provide information on the current status of the education of children with SENs.
 - The MoE through the NF & SE Branch of the Ministry shall take steps to commission research in partnership with the NEC, NIE, Universities, and other research organizations, and the research findings of such research should be disseminated through seminars, publications, and by uploading them to the Websites.
 - The NEC in liaison with the NIE and NF & SE Branch of the Ministry of Education shall conduct research forums at regular intervals to facilitate sharing information among key stakeholders and the public on special and inclusive education in Sri Lanka.

PART IV- VOLUME VII

**POLICY PROPOSALS AND
RECOMMENDED STRATEGIC
ACTIVITIES ON NON-FORMAL
EDUCATION**



1. STATUS REVIEW

1.1. Introduction

Sri Lanka is well known as a country with high standards in education and a high literacy rate of above 92.6% which is higher than anywhere else in South Asia. Education is a state-funded endeavour, granted free of charge at all levels up to university education. It is compulsory for children from age 5-16 years. In addition, the government provides free textbooks and school uniforms to all school-going children. A transport scheme at a subsidiary rate, a mid-day meal for the needy children and an insurance scheme are some of the other incentive schemes provided to attract to and retain the children in the school education. The percentage of GDP spent on education in 2018 was 2.1% out of which a large portion was allocated to provide the above-mentioned facilities.

The need for having resourceful and effective general education has been well recognized throughout history, and accordingly, a heavy priority was given to it by way of allocation of funds, provision of infrastructure facilities and learning resources, and recruitment of a large workforce. However, the inability of the formal education system to fulfil the demands arising from the world of work, and the need for providing alternative avenues for school dropouts to accomplish their educational dreams have amply justified the need for having a well-planned and systematically organized alternative education system. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has also created an educational crisis that kept many children and adolescents away from the formal education system for nearly two years. Further, there is a consensus among educationists on the importance of NFE as an effective alternative pathway addressing the educational needs of various categories of learners, and also in providing quality and affordable education for all citizens to prepare them as productive citizens contributing to the national economy and progressive development of the country.

The status and issues that hinder effective implementation of the NFE system in Sri Lanka are organized under four headings, namely; i) concept of non-formal education, ii) salient features of non-formal education in Sri Lanka, iii) evolution of non-formal education in Sri Lanka, and iv) types of stakeholders and educational providers.

1.2. Concept of Non-Formal Education (NFE)

The NFE is a loosely defined term, and considerable diversity can be found in its usage in different settings. Some relate it to the supplementary second chance education for youth and adults, whereas for some it is almost every activity happening outside the formal education system. In Sri Lanka, a broad definition has been identified encompassing education for all, compulsory education, life-long learning, remedial education, education for the underprivileged and education for the development of quality of life and eradicating poverty. However, it is questionable whether the administrative authorities of NFE in Sri Lanka at the central and provincial levels have recognized its multiple roles and worked accordingly to fulfil its role.

There is a growing interest in the present world to link the NFE to life-long education which refers to the learning that is taking place throughout ones' life. The segregation of primary, secondary, and tertiary education does not appear to be valid anymore as anybody will learn at any age, anywhere, anytime, and at their own pace if a system is available to support them. With the recent developments in the modes of learning and the expansion of the scope of non-formal education to many disciplines, a very robust and diversified non-formal education system is needed to assure the educational rights of all citizens of the country.

1.3. Salient Features of Non-Formal Education in Sri Lanka

In the initial stages, in Sri Lanka, the scope of non-formal education was narrowed down to encompass literacy and vocational aspects only. Formal schooling and its strict regulations in terms of schedule, teaching-learning time and school calendar are sometimes inappropriate for students in rural, remote, and disadvantaged areas. The school dropouts need to catch up on education to re-join schooling, whereas unemployed youth and adults need skills development programmes to join the 'world of work'. As such, there is a need to cover a broader continuum of educational programmes on flexible learning modes to facilitate the participation of children, youth and adults to engage in life-long learning. However, it is questionable whether the NFE sector with its current capacity is capable of conducting programmes to cater to the diverse needs of its wider clientele. With the increasing demands and ever-changing needs of the clientele, the NFE system in Sri Lanka requires an approach that is progressive and flexible.

1.4. Evolution of Non-Formal Education in Sri Lanka

In ancient times, education in Sri Lanka was considered as a blend of formal, informal and non-formal education and the activities were mainly focused on occupational skills, codes of behaviour and initiation into a value system. The global interest created through the publication of the report "Learning to Be" in 1972 and "Learning the Treasure Within" in 1993 by UNICEF resulted in popularizing the concept of non-formal education in the world.

The establishment of the Non-Formal Education (NFE) Branch at the Ministry of Education (*which was subsequently amalgamated with the special education unit; hence the Non-Formal and Special Education Branch – NF & SE Branch*), focusing on vocational training programmes, English language programmes and community education programmes was a significant milestone in the history of non-formal education in Sri Lanka. The NFE system was further strengthened through the commencement of the "Open School" concept by the NIE in 2005. The implementation of the Community Learning Centres (CLCs) and enactment of the Compulsory Education Circular No. 1963/30 of 2016 have also led to expanding the NFE system in Sri Lanka. However, the NF & SE Branch of the MoE claims that it does not have any power and authority to regulate, coordinate and supervise the NFE activities provided by other providers, and as such there appears to be no designated central body to regulate, promote, guide and monitor the NFE activities in Sri Lanka.

1.5. Types of Stakeholders and Education Providers

The main educational provider in the NFE sector is the NF & SE Branch of the MoE. The operational hubs of the NF & SE Branch, MoE are the Community Learning Centres (CLCs) established across the country on the basis of the identified needs of the respective locations, and the Provincial Ministries of Education provide funds for instructors and the capital cost of purchasing equipment for learning and acquisitions for the community learning centres. In 2017, there were 89 CLCs in operation throughout the country, and this network catered to 4,375 trainees (3,742 females and 633 males).

The Open School also contributes to the NFE education by providing foundation and secondary education literacy programmes for needy people through its 25 centres using training modules specifically developed for the purpose with the support of part-time teachers. In addition, entrepreneurship programmes and skill development workshops are conducted for women by the Women's Bureau, and Children's Secretariat conducts Pre-school Training Programmes and Home-based Early Childhood Development Programmes. In addition, the National Youth Council, the Ministry of Social Services and Welfare, the Department of Agriculture, the Ministry of Health and the Open University of Sri Lanka also offer NFE programmes to the general public.

1.6. Conclusion

In Sri Lanka, the NFE sector is playing a subservient role throughout history in providing education and training to needy people. At one time, formal education was considered as the panacea for many problems in the education system. However, it has been proven unsuccessful in providing solutions to many problems faced by society, particularly in terms of its educational and social needs. This fact indeed has overwhelmingly endorsed the need for a strong and well-organized NFE system for the country. Currently, the NF & SE Branch of the MoE, Open School of the NIE and several other NFE providers conduct literacy programmes, vocational programmes and awareness programmes on diverse topics by applying different approaches to fulfil the demand arising from the general public. However, it is regrettable to state that there is no well-defined policy framework for the NFE sector in Sri Lanka at present to guide and promote the establishment of its place in the national education system, and promote the integration and liaison with the formal education sector, and also to foster the coordination among all NFE providers. Further, the existing CLC model of the NF & SE Branch is not functioning well, and as such the need has arisen to strengthen the central role of the NF & SE Branch of the MoE to regulate, promote, guide and coordinate the NFE activities at Provincial, Zonal and Divisional levels. As such, it is expected that the proposed policy framework will provide a firm foundation for strengthening the activities of the NFE sector in Sri Lanka and developing a collaborative and cooperative culture among the diverse players of the NFE sector.

2. POLICY PROPOSALS AND RECOMMENDED STRATEGIC ACTIVITIES

As stated in other sections, the policy proposal and recommended strategies are formulated in accordance with the prescribed guidelines given in Part III of the NEPF (2020-2030). Backed by the comprehensive Status Review given in Section 1, the policy planning team has proceeded to identify NFE sector-specific 8 core areas and accompanying directive principles as elaborated in Part III of the NEPF (2020-2030). This approach is taken, as stated previously, to ensure the policy planning process give comprehensive coverage across all core areas and elements while giving due consideration to issues and gaps highlighted in the Status Review that are lingering the progressive developments of the NFE sector.

These 8 core areas include: i) Regulation, and Governance and Management; ii) Access, and Equity and Inclusiveness; iii) Learners and Learning Environment; iv) Curriculum Design, Content and Learning Outcomes; v) Teaching-Learning Process, Assessments and Quality Assurance; vi) Patriotism, Civic Consciousness, and Life Skills; vii) Quality of Human and Physical Resources; and viii) Financing of Non-Formal Education.

Core Area – NFE 1: Regulation, and Governance and Management

Directive Principles

- DP 1: The State assumes the responsibility of setting the national policy and the institutional and regulatory framework for non-formal education.
- DP 2: A national-level body, with well-defined powers and functions, shall regulate, guide and monitor the governance and management and activities of all the NFE training institutions.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-NFE 1.1: National policy and institutional and regulatory framework for non-formal education must be developed and adopted

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The MoE together with the NEC and in liaison with Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education shall take steps to formulate the national policy and institutional and regulatory framework for regulating and fostering the activities of the NFE sector. The proposed institutional and regulatory framework for the NFE Sector is presented in **Annex I**, and with the roles and responsibilities of the key institutions, committees, and personnel are given in **Annex II**.
- The MoE shall take steps to establish a National Committee on Non-Formal Education chaired by the Secretary, MoE and with representation from the NEC, NIE, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Services and Welfare, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Women Affairs etc., and local level NGOs, and shall take steps to lay down the development strategies, facilitate integration, collaboration, and monitoring of the NFE activities of the country.
- The MoE shall take steps to upgrade the present NF & SE Branch to a Department status, called the Department of Non-Formal Education and Special Education (*Department of NF & SE*) by combining areas of adult education, life-long education and special and inclusive education to function as the national lead agency work in liaison with the NEC, NIE, Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education, and other State and non-State NFE providers.
- The NIE shall take steps to upgrade the Open School Unit to a Department status to give due importance to NFE and to perform its role more effectively and efficiently.
- The Department of NF & SE of the MoE shall take steps to work closely with the proposed Department of Open School of the NIE to ensure the complementarity of their activities and to achieve synergy.
- The MoE through the Department of NF & SE shall take steps in liaison with the proposed Department of Open School of the NIE and Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education to establish and operationalize the institutional and regulatory framework for the NFE sector as outlined in **Annex I** and **Annex II**.
- The Department of NF & SE in liaison with the NEC shall take steps to prescribe minimum standards and guidelines for establishing and registering, and operating NFE training centres. (*This activity is detailed under the Core Area - NFE 5; Policy-NFE 5.2*)
- The Department of NF & SE in liaison with the NEC shall take the responsibility of establishing review, monitoring, and certification system for the NFE training centres. (*This activity is detailed under the Core Area - NFE 5; Policy-NFE 5.2*)
- The MoE should take steps to provide adequate funds and human resources to the Department of NF & SE to implement its activities effectively as the lead agency of the NFE sector.
- The proposed Department of NF & SE of the MoE, in consultation with the NEC, NIE, and Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education shall take steps to develop a Manual of Operation on Non-Formal Education to explain the duties and functions of all stakeholders involved in the NFE activities and to provide guidelines and codes of practices for CLCs and Open Schools.

- The Department of Open School of the NIE, in collaboration with the Department of NF & SE of the MoE shall take steps for developing guidelines for curricula and instructional material for NFE programmes, providing in-service training for trainers, monitoring the implementation of the NFE programmes, and also take steps to conduct research on NFE.

Policy-NFE 1.2:

Devolve the implementation of the Non-Formal Education programmes to the Provincial Administration while the Centre takes the responsibility of setting the policy, regulations, guidelines, curricula and undertaking monitoring and certification

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The MoE shall take steps to transfer the responsibility of manning the Community Learning Centres (CLCs) to respective Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education and transfer the NFE Project Officers' cadre also to the respective Provincial Administrations through appropriate establishment procedures.
- The Provincial Ministry/Department of Education shall take steps to establish an NFE Unit under their purview and assign human and physical resources to streamline and strengthen their activities of the NFE sector in the respective Provinces.
- The Provincial Department of Education shall take steps to establish the Provincial Coordinating Committee on Non-Formal Education chaired by the Director to promote, integrate and monitor the NFE activities in the respective Provinces. The other members of the Committee shall be the Zonal Directors, Divisional Directors, NFE Project Officers in the respective Provinces and Zones, and Divisional Offices, and representatives from other State and non-State NFE providers in the respective provinces. The Coordinating Committee on NFE shall have meetings regularly and review the progress of activities relating to NFE.
- The NFE Coordinating Officers (*Directors or Deputy Directors*) of the Provinces in liaison with the Zonal and Divisional Officers, and NFE Project Officers should collect data on the NFE at the zonal and provincial levels and feed them into the Central Data Management System maintained by the Department of NF & SE of the MoE.

Policy-NFE 1.3:

The Ministry of Education shall strengthen the NFE sector to function in parallel with the formal education sector while maintaining close collaboration between the two sectors

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education through the Zonal and the Divisional Offices shall promote coordination between the NFE Project Officers and school administrations to identify the children who have already dropped out and also who are likely to be dropped out and promote their participation either in NFE programmes or direct them back to school education.
- The Divisional Director of Education in consultation with the Supervision Committee of Compulsory Education (*as prescribed by the MoE Circular No. 1963/30*) shall take the responsibility for ensuring the smooth transition of children from the NFE programmes to school education with a strong follow-up and monitoring

mechanism to facilitate the retention and the learning process of such children.

- The Department of NF & SE of the MoE in liaison with the Provincial Department of Education shall develop a mechanism to offer certificates for those who complete the NFE programmes to facilitate the continuation of their schooling, or enrolling into the technical and vocation education and training (TVET) programmes, or facilitating their entry into the formal and informal job markets.

Core Area – NFE 2: Access, and Equity and Inclusiveness

Directive Principles

- DP 1: The State assumes the responsibility of ensuring “Education for All”.
- DP 2: The State assures equity and inclusion in education where need-based support is available to all learners to thrive within the non-formal education system, regardless of gender, race, religion or social status, geographical location, or disabilities.
- DP 3: The State promotes the non-formal education programmes targeting adults, women, displaced or marginal communities, and those who wish to engage in life-long learning.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-NFE 2.1: Broaden the coverage and expand opportunities for non-formal education while ensuring equity and inclusiveness

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The Department of NF & SE of the MoE in liaison with the Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education shall take steps to expand the CLC network and strengthen the capacity of CLCs to identify the training needs, and design and offer a wide range of programmes to serve the needy groups (*i.e. women, adults, youth, school leavers, etc.*) to promote life-long learning.
- The Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education through Zonal and Divisional Offices and CLC network shall expand their programmes to children and adolescents to facilitate the completion of unfinished schooling through the NFE Programmes and offer certification of completion, and facilitate the continuation of their schooling and/or entering into TVET institutions or entering into the formal and informal labour markets.
- The Department of NF & SE of the MoE and Department of Open School of the NIE shall conduct national TV and radio programmes in liaison with the Provincial Education Departments and Zonal Education Offices to increase awareness of the public on NFE programmes.
- The Department of NF & SE of the MoE and Department of Open School of the NIE shall carry out need analysis surveys annually to identify the changing needs of different target groups in the community and the results should be shared with the State and non-State NFE providers to accommodate those identified training needs in their annual training programmes.

Policy-NFE 2.2:

Non-formal education sector should closely liaise with the technical and vocational education and training sector and institutions to ensure resource sharing and to gain recognition for non-formal education training programmes through the National Vocational Qualification Framework

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The Department of NF & SE of the MoE in consultation with the National Committee on Non-Formal Education and the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC) shall draw up the standards for CLC programmes to seek and obtain recognition under the National Vocational Education Qualification Framework.
- The Department of NF & SE of the MoE and TVEC together shall take steps to develop and adopt a system for certification of non-formal education programmes to ensure the NFE certification as a pre-vocational qualification for enrolling into formal programmes offered by the TVET institutions and training centres
- The NFE Unit of the Provincial Ministry/Department of Education and the Zonal and Divisional Education Offices shall closely work with TVET institutions and training centres of the respective areas in implementing the NFE programmes.

Core Area – NFE 3: Learners and Learning Environment**Directive Principle**

- DP 1: Learners must be guided through the NFE programmes about the options available in learning pathways and career opportunities to ensure every individual chooses the best learning pathway to reach the full potential to make him/her productively employable in the 'world of work'.
- DP 2: Education of the NFE programmes must be offered in a flexible manner using a variety of delivery methods with multiple entry and exit points.
- DP 3: The learners of the NFE programmes must be guided throughout the learning process to equip them with the necessary competencies to succeed in their personal lives within a rapidly changing society.
- DP 4: Learners of the NFE programmes must be provided with necessary awareness of moral and ethical norms, personal hygiene, etiquette, interpersonal relations, social cohesion and ethnic harmony, and their role in preserving the environment.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-NFE 3.1: Formal and non-formal education sectors and programmes must integrate at all levels of learning to fulfil the requirements of learners

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The Department of NF & SE of the MoE working through the Department of Open School of the NIE, Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education, school communities, and TVET training institutions/centres shall encourage and facilitate all State and non-State NFE providers to offer diverse and need-based NFE programme targeting young out-of-school children, adolescents, youth and adults.
- The Provincial NFE authorities together with schools and religious institutions in the area and government service institutions such as MoH office, Police, *Samurdhi office*, *Gramaniladhari office*, etc., shall take steps to conduct awareness programmes through the CLS network for all categories of the general public to improve their quality of life by helping to address social issues, family related issues, health issues, and the other issues relating to livelihoods at a convenient time in flexible modes.

Policy-NFE 3.2: Non-Formal Education training providers must provide employment or livelihood-oriented training activities to the communities in the respective catchment areas enabling people to gain basic knowledge, skills, technical, and social skills to facilitate and encourage them to engage in productive activities

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The Department of NF & SE of the MoE together with the Department of Open School of the NIE, Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education and in liaison with other State and non-State organizations which provide services in health care, agriculture, environment protection, water and sanitation, etc., shall take steps to assure the incorporation of short-term attachments to industry, business, service and agriculture sector organizations targeting the development and/or updating of employability/livelihood skills of the participants of the NFE programmes.
- The Department of NF & SE of the MoE together with the Department of Open School of the NIE and Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education shall take steps to ensure that all NFE programmes offer compulsory practical training components to ensure the trainees acquire the skills required to succeed in modern society such as ICT skills, communication skills, leadership skills, 21st century skills, etc.

Policy-NFE 3.3: The Non-Formal Education sector together with the formal education sector should enhance family and community relationships to provide a healthy learning environment for learners

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The CLCs together with the schools in catchment areas shall introduce activities such as clubs, societies,

Shramadana, tournaments, new year celebrations, religious ceremonies, etc., to promote interactions among people and families and build healthy relationships within and among families and between families and the community, and to promote ethnic harmony and social cohesion.

- The CLCs together with schools in the respective catchment areas shall offer short term programmes/courses for community members to educate them on moral and ethical norms, essential life skills (*such as interpersonal skills, teamwork, analytical and conceptual skills*), and create greater awareness on personal health and hygiene, etiquette and cleanliness, and environmental conservation and enrichment.
- The CLCs shall take steps to promote its role as a catalytic centre to provide a multitude of community training programmes and services to foster the socio-economic advancement of the community.

Core Area – NFE 4: Curriculum Design, Content and Learning Outcomes

Directive Principle

- DP 1: The design and development of NFE curricula and teaching/training guides shall be a State responsibility.
- DP 2: The content and delivery of NFE programmes should undergo periodic evaluations and continuous monitoring and modifications to suit the intended purposes and requirements of the diverse target groups.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-NFE 4.1: The curriculum design of non-formal education training programmes must allow sufficient flexibility for the trainers to adapt it to suit the training needs and for learners to choose programmes/courses to suit their needs and preferences

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The Department of Open School of the NIE shall function as the lead agency for the design and development of curricula for NFE programmes/courses.
- The Department of Open School of the NIE in collaboration with the Department of NF & SE of the MoE and the Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education shall take steps to develop appropriate modular curricula for different study programmes/courses.
- The Department of Open School of the NIE shall develop and provide Teacher/Trainer Guides on the application/adaptation of prescribed curricula to suit the needs of different target groups.
- The Department of the Open School of the NIE, in consultation with the Department of NF & SE of the MoE, and the Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education shall conduct training programmes to NFE providers on the design and development of quality and relevant learning material and resources for learners and on the pedagogies applicable for different age groups.

Policy-NFE 4.2:

Curricula of NFE programmes and courses/modules must be subjected to regular monitoring and revision to maintain the quality and relevance

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The Department of Open School of the NIE in liaison with the Department of NF & SE of the MoE and Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education shall take steps to maintain relevance, quality and flexibility of curricula of NFE programmes/courses through regular monitoring of the implementation of the curricula by State and non-State NFE providers and the trainees' outcomes.
- The Department of Open School of the NIE in collaboration with the Department of NF & SE of the MoE and Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education shall take steps to conduct regular need assessment surveys and research on the NFE to identify the training needs of the diverse target groups.
- The Department of NF & SE of the MoE in liaison with the Department of Open School of the NIE shall take steps to provide training for trainers/resource persons of all NFE training providers/centres of both the State and non-State on the application prescribed curricula and also for adapting them to meet the needs of different target groups.

Core Area – NFE 5: Teaching-Learning Process, Assessment and Quality Assurance**Directive Principles**

- DP 1: The teaching-learning process should embrace as much as possible learner-centered and activity-based teaching-learning so as to promote experiential/authentic learning.
- DP 2: Assessment and certification of students' achievements should be based on practical-based formative assessments instead of written summative assessments.
- DP 3: The State assumes the responsibility of putting in place a quality assurance and certification system to ensure the quality and relevance of NFE programmes/courses.
- DP 4: All NFE centres and programmes must be subjected to regular review and monitoring to ascertain the degree of compliance of the NFE centres and programmes/courses with prescribed standards, guidelines and codes of practice to ensure the quality and relevance of NFE programmes/courses.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-NFE 5.1: The Non-Formal Education programmes should be offered by adopting modern teaching-learning and assessment methods, and the students' outcomes should be certified by offering a valid certificate

Recommended Strategic Activities

- All NFE providers (*Department of NF & SE of the MoE and Department of Open School of the NIE, Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education, other State and non-State providers*) shall take necessary steps to incorporate student-centered, activity-based methods in the teaching-learning assessment process.
- The Department of NF & SE of the MoE together with the NIE through its Open School Department shall take steps to conduct training programmes for trainers of the NFE training centres operated by the State and non-State NFE providers to familiarize themselves with the modern teaching-learning and assessment methods and tools including the adoption of electronic and digital media such as TV, radio, print and online, and social media platforms appropriate for NFE programme delivery.
- All NFE Providers shall conduct assessment processes of the NFE programmes in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Department of Open School of the NIE and the issue of certificates of successful completion with the endorsement of the NFE Coordinating Committee at the Provincial Ministry/Department of Education.

Policy-NFE 5.2: Develop and implement a quality assurance system to assure the quality and relevance of the NFE programmes/courses

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The Department of NF & SE of the MoE shall take steps to issue regulations and guidelines to all Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education to implement a compulsory registration of all State and non-State NFE providers and training centres with the respective Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education.
- The Department of NF & SE of MoE in liaison with the NEC, QA Branch of MoE, Department of Open School of the NIE, and the Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education shall prepare and issue minimum standards for the establishment and registration of all State and non-State NFE training centres.
- The Department of the NF & SE of the MoE in liaison with the NEC, QA Branch of MoE, Department of Open School of the NIE, and the Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education shall take steps to design and develop standards and guidelines and codes of practices and review and certification system for the NFE programmes offered by State and non-State organizations and take steps to implement the review and certification/accreditation process.
- The Department of NF & SE of the MoE, in collaboration with the Department of Open School of the NIE shall develop and maintain model Community Learning Centres and model programmes at suitable central and regional locations (*preferably through the public-private partnerships*) to set the standards for other State and non-State NFE training providers.

Core Area – NFE 6: Patriotism, Civic Consciousness and Life Skills

Directive Principles

DP 1: Non-formal education must be used as a platform to instil patriotism and civic consciousness and impart life skills in people among communities.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-NFE 6. 1: All Non-Formal Education programmes should focus on the promotion of patriotism and civic consciousness, and imparting life skills among the people in communities

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The Department of NF & SE of the MoE, in collaboration with the Department of Open School of the NIE shall take steps to promote/conduct discussions, seminars, forums, videos, dramas, competitions etc., via TV/radio and social media focusing on the promotion of civic consciousness, nationalism and patriotism, and ethnic harmony and social cohesion .
- The Department of NF & SE of the MoE, in collaboration with the Department of Open School of the NIE shall promote integrating compulsory activities (*such as group projects/assignments, case studies, etc.,*) into NFE programmes/courses conducted by CLCs, Open Schools and other NFE training providers aiming at developing human values such as teamwork, empathy, respect for others, democratic spirit, the spirit of service, respect for public property, etc., in all citizens.
- The Department of NF & SE of the MoE in collaboration with the Department of Open School of the NIE shall design and introduce course modules into NFE programmes to impart life skills such as communication, cooperation, teamwork, leadership, managerial and entrepreneurial skills, resilience, self-confidence, and vision for life.

Core Area – NFE 7: Quality of Human and Physical Resources

Directive Principles

DP 1: The State considers teachers and trainers as the heart of the teaching-learning process of the non-formal education sector as in the case with other sectors, and ensures the provision of adequate opportunities for quality professional development for all categories of teachers/trainers.

DP 2: The State ensures the provision of non-formal education opportunities irrespective of geographical location and student numbers through appropriately resourced training centres/facilities.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-NFE 7.1: Promote recruitment of graduates to the Non-Formal Education sector and provide them with suitable training at induction and a clear pathway for career progression

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The Department of NF & SE of the MoE shall work with the Department of Management Services and National Salaries Commission to revisit the decision taken not to fill the vacancies of NFE project officers, and take necessary steps to fill the existing vacancies, and also to create an additional cadre of NFE Project Officers, to allocate at least one NFE Project Officer per Divisional Education Office level.
- The Department of NF & SE of the MoE in consultation with the NIE shall develop a recruitment criterion to recruit graduates into the NFE Project Officer cadre to facilitate the effective conduct of the NFE programmes.
- The Department of NF & SE of the MoE in liaison with the NIE shall design, develop and conduct suitable induction training programmes for newly recruited NFE Project Officers.
- The Department of NF & SE of the MoE shall take steps to provide opportunities for in-service training and continuous professional development programmes to all categories of staff in the NFE Sector.
- The Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education shall appoint NFE Project Officers to Zonal and Divisional Education Offices to streamline the NFE activities in the respective administrative areas.
- The Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education shall monitor the activities of the NFE Project Officers assigned to Zonal and Divisional Education Offices.
- The Department of NF & SE of the MoE shall take steps to develop a suitable promotion scheme and career progression pathway for all categories of staff in the NFE sector.

Policy-NFE 7.2: Delivery of the non-formal education programmes should be done through close coordination with formal education providers to ensure full utilization of available training resources

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The Department of NF & SE of the MoE, the Department of Open School of the NIE and the other NFE providers shall deliver the NFE programmes using existing NFE network, school network, TVET institution/centre network, etc., to assure coordination and optimum utilization of resources at national and provincial levels.
- The Department of NF & SE of the MoE shall maintain strong linkages with the other State and non-State NFE training providers to avoid duplication of activities and wastage of resources.
- The Department of NF & SE shall invite all the NFE training providers to participate at provincial level Co-ordinating Committee meetings and the nominated representatives to participate at the National Level Coordinating Committee and Steering Committee.

- The Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education shall maintain a separate fund for the NFE activities to provide funds to NFE Project Officers to rent/hire the training facilities/places, if required, and to acquire required resource material to facilitate the conduct of the NFE training programmes.

Core Area – NFE 8: Financing of Non-Formal Education

Directive Principles

DP 1: The State assures the responsibility of funding the non-formal education programmes.

DP 2: The State encourages true philanthropic private and community participation in non-formal education by providing financial/tax incentives within a conducive regulatory framework to operate as not-for-profit educational institutions.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-NFE 8.1: Ensure the provision of sufficient funds for the NFE sector

Recommended Strategic Activities

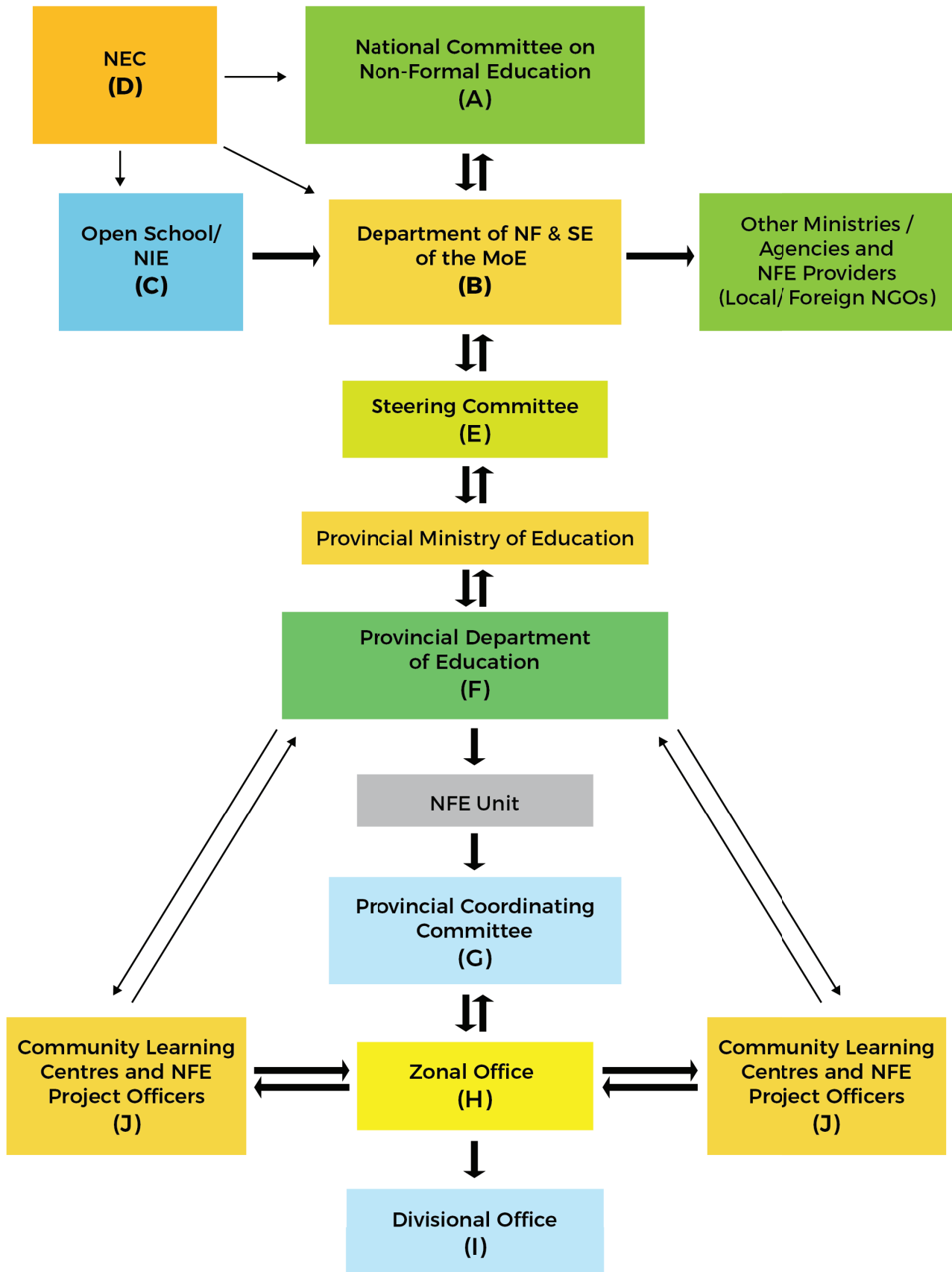
- The MoE together with Provincial Ministries of Education shall take steps to increase the annual allocation of government funds to the Department of the NF & SE, and the Provincial and Zonal/Divisional level NFE training units substantially.
- The Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education shall take steps to strengthen CLCs by providing required resources such as trained personnel, modern IT equipment, and other facilities by direct funding as well as through corporate sector partnerships.
- The Department of NF & SE of the MoE and Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education shall develop national plans for the NFE activities to strengthen the non-formal education provisions and promote synergy among State and non-State NFE providers.

Policy-NFE 8.2: Public and private partnerships must be promoted in the provision of NFE programmes

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The Department of NF & SE of the MoE and Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education shall seek the assistance of private organizations to offer NFE training programmes for the unemployed youth and adults.
- The Department of NF & SE of the MoE and Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education shall encourage the private sector to provide apprentice training placements, and, if possible, to offer employment opportunities for the participants after completion of the apprentice training.

Annex 1: Proposed Institutional and Regulatory Framework for the NFE Sector



Source: Author's Illustration

(A) National Committee on Non-Formal Education

Composition

- Secretary/MoE (Chairman)
- Chairman/NEC
- Director-General/NIE, and
- Representatives from Dept. of NF & SE (Convener), DDG/ Alternative Education, Director/Open Schools, Director/Teacher Education of NIE, other NFE providers namely the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Services, Ministry of Public Services, Provincial Councils and Local Government, National Secretariat for Early Childhood Development (NSECD), Department of Probation and Child Care Services, National Youth Council, and other relevant government agencies.

Functions

- Provide general directions for the NFE sector on the basis of National Policy on NFE.
- Review and approve strategic plans and annual action plans and review the progress of implementation of the approved plans by the key national and provincial authorities and Open Schools and CLCs.
- Facilitate coordination and collaboration among State and non-State NEF providers.
- Facilitate sharing of expertise, training facilities, learning resources, etc.
- Discuss issues and problems of the NFE sector and provide solutions for common problems & issues.

(B) Department of NF & SE of the MoE

Functions

- Key national department /agency responsible for regulating, fostering, guiding and monitoring of NFE sector.
- Develop a Manual of Operation for NFE to detail out the powers and functions of key players – MoE, Dept. of NF & SE, Department of Open Schools of NIE, Provincial Ministry and Department of Education, Zonal and Divisional Education Offices and NFE Project officers and CLCs.
- Develop strategic plans and annual action plans for the NFE sector in liaison with the Provincial Departments of Education and facilitate the implementation of the annual plans in collaboration with provincial authorities.
- Liaise with the Department of Open Schools of the NIE in developing curricula of NFE programmes/courses.
- Develop minimum standards for the establishment and registration of CLCs/ NFE training centres in consultation with the NEC, Department of Open Schools of the NIE, and Provincial Authorities.
- Conduct promotional programmes through print and electronic media to create awareness of NFE programmes among the target groups and the public.
- Conduct regular need analysis surveys and undertake commissioned research.
- Establish and maintain a national level database and management system.
- Establish and maintain model CLCs and conduct model NFE programmes/courses.

- Design and implement quality assurance system for NFE sector in liaison with the NEC and the Quality Assurance Unit of the MoE.

(C) Dept. of Open Schools of the NIE

Functions

- Develop curricula for NFE programmes/courses including the guidelines for curricula adaptation, monitor implementation and undertake revisions of curricula at periodic intervals.
- Conduct training programmes for teachers/instructors/NFE Project Officers of the NFE sector.
- Design and conduct NFE programmes/courses through Open Schools in liaison with the Dept. of NF & SE and CLCs.
- Develop and conduct TV/Radio programmes and innovative models for teaching and learning in NFE with the adoption of ICT-based tools and applications.
- Engage in research on NFE.
- Collaborate with other local and international agencies/institutes linked to NFE.

(D) National Education Commission

Functions

- Assist the Dept. of NF & SE of the MoE to prepare minimum standards for the establishment and registration of CLCs/NFE training centres operated by the State and non-State NFE providers.
- Design and develop a quality assurance and accreditation system for the NFE sector in liaison with the Department of NF & SE, Quality Assurance Unit of the MoE, and Open Schools of NIE and provincial NFE authorities.
- Provide technical assistance to the Department of NF & SE of MoE in implementing the quality assurance and accreditation system for the NFE sector.
- Assist the Department of Open School of the NIE to develop curricula, instructional manuals and guidelines for NFE programmes.
- Assist the Dept. of NF & SE of MoE to develop a Manual of Operation for NFE to explain the power and authorities of the Departments of NF & SE of MoE and Open Schools of NIE, responsibilities of Provincial Ministry/Department of Education and Provincial, Zonal, Divisional Education Offices, NFE Project officers and CLCs.

(E) Steering Committee at the Department NFE & SE of the MoE

Composition

- Director/Department of NF & SE (Chairman)
- Director of the Department of Open Schools of the NIE
- Directors of the Provincial Departments of Education
- Deputy Directors or Asst. Directors of Zonal Education Offices
- Representatives from other relevant Departments/Branches/Units of the MoE and other ministries

Functions

- Review and approve Strategic Plans and Annual Action Plans for the NFE sector.
- Monitor implementation of Annual Action Plans of the NFE sector by provincial-level authorities.
- Monitor the NFE activities conducted by the national and provincial level agencies.
- Discuss the problems and issues of Provincial, Zonal, and Divisional Offices in implementing NFE activities.
- Discuss issues and gaps of the NFE sector and design reforms and remedies required for addressing the identified issues and gaps.
- Regular review & monitoring of NFE programmes operating at the national and provincial levels and prepare reports to the National Committee on Non-Formal Education.
- Discuss any other matters relevant to the NFE sector.

(F) Provincial Dept. of Education

Functions

- Functions as the lead agency for the implementation of NFE activities within the Province.
- Liaise with the NF & SE of the MoE in preparing Strategic Plans and Annual Plans on NFE activities.
- Allocate funds to Zonal and Divisional Offices, and CLCs.
- Implement NFE programmes through Zonal and Divisional Education Office, and CLS network of the Province.

Director

- Supervision, monitoring and guiding the functions of Zonal and Divisional offices and CLCs.
- Reporting progress of the NFE activities to the Provincial Ministry/Department of Education and the Department of NF & SE of the MoE.

Deputy Director

- Empowering Zonal/Divisional Officers to implement regulations and guidelines applicable to the NFE sector.
- Design programmes for Zones/Divisional Officers considering the community and target group needs.
- Design programmes for youth and adults and empower NFE Project Officers to implement such programmes.
- Supervision, monitoring and guiding the functions of zonal and divisional offices and CLCs.
- Supply data and progress reports to the Provincial Department of Education.

NFE Project Officer I

- Assist the Director and Deputy Director to plan NFE activities and supervising the implementation of such activities by the CLCs.
- Update the NFE data system.

(G) Provincial Coordinating Committee at the Provincial Department of Education

Composition

- Provincial Director of Education (Chairman)
- Director/Dept. of Education, Directors of Zonal and Divisional Education Offices, Provincial Coordinator of NFE Project Officers, representatives from the Provincial Department of Health, Social Services, and Probation and Childcare Service, and representatives of State and non-State NFE Providers

Functions

- Review progress of NFE activities conducted by the Zonal and Divisional Offices through CLCs network and by other State and non-State NFE training providers.
- Coordination of NFE of activities conducted by the State and non-State NFE training providers at the provincial level.
- Monitor progress of activities that are undertaken at Zonal and Divisional levels and by the NFE Project Officers.
- Solving issues and problems encountered at provincial, zonal and CLC levels.
- Support the Department of NF & SE to conduct need analysis surveys.
- Collect and collate relevant data and feed into the national data management system of the Department of NF & SE of MoE.

(H) Zonal Education Office

Functions

- Functions as the lead agency for the implementation of NFE activities within the Zone.
- Liaise with the Provincial Department of Education in preparing annual plans on NFE activities.
- Implement NFE programmes through the Divisional Education Office and CLS network of the Zone.

Deputy/Asst. Director Education

- Plan NFE programmes according to the needs of the Zone.
- Empower divisions, schools and the community to implement compulsory education regulations.
- Plan youth and adult NFE programmes and allocate funds.
- Supervision and monitoring of NFE programmes conducted by the Divisional Offices through CLCs.
- Supply data and progress reports to the Provincial Dept. of Education.

Project Officer II

- Coordination of NFE activities of the Zone.
- Update the data system on NFE and related aspects.
- Assist the Zonal Directors Office in implementing NFE programmes.
- Monitor the functions of the CLCs.

(I) Divisional Office

Functions

- Assess the needs of youth and adults and design and present the programmes to Director/Zonal Office for approval for implementation.
- Supervision and monitoring of activities conducted by the CLCs.
- Provide data and progress reports to the Zonal Office.

NFE Project Officer III

- Function as the officer-in-charge of the CLCs in the Divisional Area.
- Work in liaison with the School Development Committees to identify dropouts/out of school students and assist them to re-join the formal schools or enrol in NFE training programmes and/or in vocational training programmes offered by the TVET institutions.
- Identify NFE training programmes according to the needs of the youth and adults in the respective administrative areas and implement them through CLCs.
- Liaise with the relevant authorities in implementing the planned NFE training programmes.

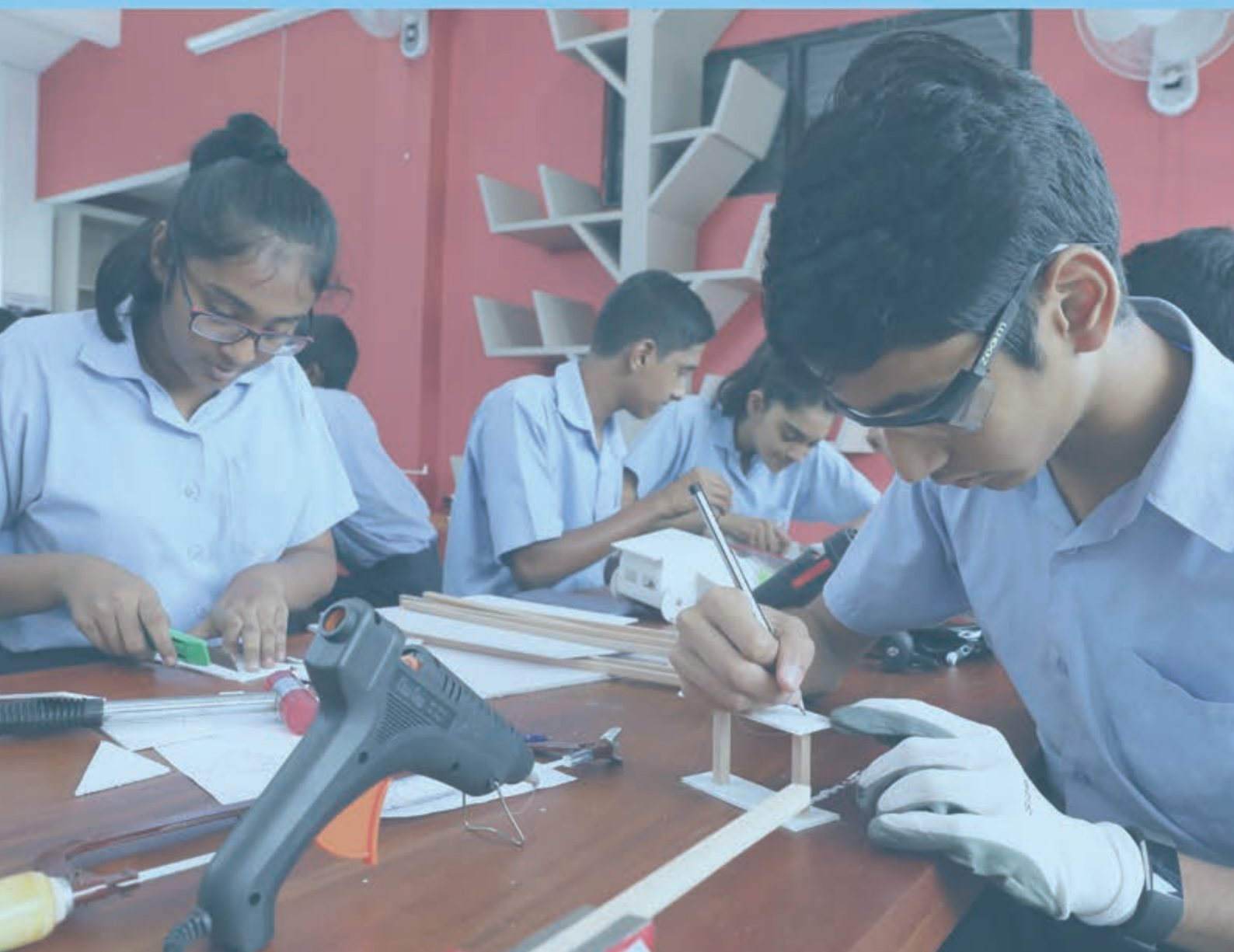
(J) Community Learning Centres

Functions

- Functions as the grassroot level NFE training delivery points.
- Conduct NFE programmes approved by the Zonal/Divisional Authorities to cater for the needs of the community of the geographical location and catchment area.
- Conduct awareness programmes for the community on NFE activities offered by the CLCs.

PART IV- VOLUME VIII

**POLICY PROPOSALS AND
RECOMMENDED STRATEGIC
ACTIVITIES ON INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOL EDUCATION**



1. STATUS REVIEW

1.1. Introduction

International schools (IS) have become an important cohort of the national education system in Sri Lanka. These are defined as “schools that provide education to any national from the age of 5-18 years (*both years inclusive*) according to a foreign or local curriculum in the medium of English or any other foreign language, invested and operated by the private sector”. At present, these schools are registered as investment projects under the Board of Investment (BOI) and/or then incorporated under the Companies Act No. 07 of 2007 or under the Business Names Registration Ordinance (*Business Names Registration Ordinance 8 of 1938 and 7 of 1987*).

1.2. Global Context

The emergence of international schools is more of a recent phenomenon. Today, most major cities of many countries have at least one ‘good’ international school, if not several. Since of late, Asia has dominated the growth of international schools. Sri Lanka and the neighbouring countries have witnessed significant growth in this sector during the last decade. By 2027, the prediction is for over 16,000 international schools worldwide that would cater to over 10 million students, and Asia is expected to account for over 50% of all international schools worldwide.

There appear to be many possible reasons for the phenomenal growth of international schools. Globalization and the opening of the economies worldwide have contributed to the expansion of the middle and the upper-middle-class sectors of the society that possess increased wealth, and have higher expectations. This particular segment of society is also increasingly exposed to what happens in the developed world and naturally want their children to receive an education that will prepare them for the globalized world. The demand for international schools is further fuelled as the Governments in most of these countries are struggling to meet these rising expectations of the parents for quality education, and international schools appear to be an attractive option for most affluent parents.

1.3. Sri Lankan Context

The first international school in Sri Lanka, the Overseas Children’s School was inaugurated in 1958 to cater to the educational needs of the children of the diplomatic community. Since the adoption of the open economic policies in the late 1970s, many international schools came into operation with the approval of the BOI and registered with the Registrar of Companies, under the Companies Act No 17 of 1982. Permission to establish Colombo International School (CIS) was granted subject to certain conditions, such as: a) enrolment of students must be restricted to those over 14 years in the case of non-Sri Lankans and those over 18 years in the case of Sri Lankans; b) employment of expatriate staff must be subjected to the approval of the Ministry of Education; c) institutions must be registered as a company after obtaining prior approval of the Ministry of Education for the Memorandum and Articles of Association, and d) progress reports must be submitted when called for to the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance and Planning. Further, in 2004, the Management and Quality Assurance Unit of the Ministry of Education has prescribed a set of criteria for international and English medium fee-levying private schools and the conditions on which they shall operate. Though the Ministry of Education issued the above-mentioned circular letter in 2004, the letter itself has also stated that prevailing legal impediments imposed by the Assisted Schools and Training Colleges (*Supplementary Provisions*) Act No. 8 of 1961 may not allow the full implementation of the prescribed quality assurance procedure. As such the prescribed regulatory framework for quality assurance has never been implemented. Moreover, because of this legal impediment, many private schools offering only the local curriculum have emerged under the category of international schools, and they appear to operate only with the registration under Companies Act No. 07 of 2007, or under the Business Names Registration Ordinance (*No. 8 of 1938 and 7 of 1987*). Thus, in the absence of a steadfastly imposed regulatory framework, it appears that the international school sector has expanded in an unregulated manner over the past few decades.

1.4. Current Statistics and Status

As of the information available at the MoE, there exists three categories of international schools: i) schools following an international curriculum (*Edexcel or Cambridge*); ii) schools offering both international and local curricula, and iii) schools offering local curriculum only. Almost 50% of the international schools are in the Western Province and another 17.5% are in the Central Province. It is also noteworthy that one-fourth of the international schools are in Colombo District. According to the Ministry of Education data sources, as of 2018/2019, there were 395 International schools catering for well over 143,123 students, with a teacher population of 13,731. In terms of the number of students per school, out of the 386 schools for which data were available, there was one school with more than 5,000 students, three with 2,501-5,000, and another nineteen with 1,001-2,500 students. At the other end, there were 250 schools with students between 100-1,000. Further, 113 schools had less than 100 students. As the number of students increased, the student-teacher ratio too has increased. Of the 395 schools, no information on the curricula used was available for 147 schools. It is noteworthy that 143 schools were using the local curriculum, with another 59 local and other curricula. There were several other categories of schools; one school each using local curriculum and teaching the religion of Islam, local curriculum and Arabic curriculum, local curriculum, and Christian education, and two schools using Arabic curriculum only.

1.5. Issues and Gaps

Reports and research in the area of international schools are very scanty. Nonetheless, there exist few research reports, and the information emanating from these limited reports together with the widely held public opinions on this sector are discussed below. Some researchers have highlighted the perceived advantages that can be offered by a 'good' international school. They stated that the increasing presence of 'international schools', could re-create the duality of the education system that existed during the colonial period in Sri Lanka. Hence, they argued for careful monitoring of the spread of the 'international schools' in Sri Lanka to facilitate the positive effects, and to prevent the negative effects influencing the process of change. Further, they stated that while public schools are segregated along the linguistic and religious divides, the international schools due to their all-encompassing nature tend to play a more significant role in fostering pluralism. Contrary to the above, few others argued that international schools have created a negative influence in terms of the socio-economic context. They argued that as the international schools cater only for a minute affluent group of Sri Lankan society, and as such these schools could reinforce and aggravate the disparities in existence between the different socio-economic classes of the country. Moreover, they claimed that there was no uniformity in physical facilities, teaching-learning resources, human resources, and education provisions except the medium of instruction which was English. Further, many educationists and administrators argue that as the international schools operate in the general education sector only with the registration of Companies Act No. 07 of 2007, or under the Business Names Registration Ordinance (*No. 8 of 1938 and 7 of 1987*), the requirements to be fulfilled by many such schools are limited to the conditions stipulated in the Companies Act or Business Names Registration Ordinance, even though the purpose of establishment of such schools is to provide quality early childhood, primary and secondary education for students in the country.

1.6. Conclusion

International schools in Sri Lanka function as business entities with registration with the Registrar of Companies under Companies Act No. 07 of 2007, or with the Departments of Business Registration under the Business Names Registration Ordinance (*No. 8 of 1938 and 7 of 1987*). Though international schools form an important cohort of the national education system, they operate without any formal registration and supervision of the Ministry of Education. These schools differ in types of offerings with respect to curricula, the number of students, quality and adequacy of physical and human resources, and the quality and the standards of education provisions. Given the above context, it is vital to establish and implement a proper regulatory mechanism that encompasses aspects such as registration, governance and management, education standards, and monitoring and certification system so as to ensure these

international schools adopt the national education policy and framework and standards, and thereby promoting better integration into the national education system.

2. POLICY PROPOSALS AND RECOMMENDED STRATEGIC ACTIVITIES

These Policy Proposals and Recommended Strategic Activities are formulated in accordance with the guidelines prescribed in Part III of NEPF (2020-2030). Backed by the comprehensive Status Review given in Section 1, the policy planning team has proceeded to identify international school education sector-specific 8 core areas and accompanying directive principles as elaborated in Part III of the NEPF (2020-2030).

This approach is taken, as stated previously, to ensure the policy planning process gives comprehensive coverage across all core areas and elements while giving due consideration to issues and gaps highlighted in the Status Review that are lingering the progressive developments of the international school education sector. These 8 core areas include: i) Regulation, and Governance and Management; ii) Medium of Instruction and Curriculum; iii) Learners and Learning Environment; iv) Teaching-Learning and Assessment; v) Personality Development and Civic Consciousness; vi) Human Resources; vii) Physical Resources; and viii) Quality Assurance and Certification. Each core area contains policy context, directive principles, and proposed policy proposals and recommended strategic activities.

In the Executive Summary, only the policy proposals, directive principles, and strategic activity frameworks relevant to respective policies are presented.

Core Area – IS 1: Regulation, and Governance and Management

Directive Principles

- DP 1: The State recognizes international schools as a part of the national school system.
- DP 2: The State assumes the responsibility of laying down the required legislations and regulations pertaining to registration and monitoring and certification of international schools.
- DP 3: All international schools must provide access to students from all ethnic and religious denominations.
- DP 4: All international schools must teach national languages and religions covering Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity, and Islam.
- DP 5: The State would not allow any schools to be established in line with religious denominations.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-IS 1.1:

All international schools are considered as an integral part of the national education system and shall come under the government of regulation and monitoring, and quality control

Recommended Strategic Activities

- Until the required amendments are enacted to the existing Acts relating to education or enactment of a new Education Act, the Ministry of Education with the approval of the Cabinet of Ministers shall take steps to establish a Specified Authority for International School Education (SAISE) for the regulation and overseeing the matters related to of international school education sector.
- The Specified Authority for International School Education shall be guided by an Advisory Committee (*such as Advisory Committee for International School Education-ACISE*), chaired by the Secretary of Ministry of Education, and consisting of appointed members by the Minister of Education, including the representatives from international schools, Board of Investment, and Chamber of Commerce (*International Schools*).
- The Specified Authority for International School Education shall formulate and issue regulations and guidelines pertaining to registration and management of international schools, specifying the following:
 - All international schools shall comply with government prescribed national education policy, regulations, and guidelines.
 - All international schools shall comply with governance and management guidelines prescribed by the Specified Authority.
 - All international schools must be committed to managing the enterprises, not solely as profit-generating entities.
 - All international schools shall provide access to students from all ethnic and religious denominations.
 - All international schools shall teach national languages (*Sinhala and Tamil*) and religions covering Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, and any other religions as appropriate.
 - No international school shall operate only on a particular religious or ethnic line.
 - All international schools must get parents involved in school affairs and activities.

Core Area – IS 2: Medium of Instruction and Curriculum

Directive Principles

- DP 1: The State allows English as the medium of instruction in international schools from Pre-school, and from Grade 1 to 13.
- DP 2: All international schools must offer opportunities for Sinhala-speaking children to learn Tamil and Tamil-speaking children learn Sinhala.

- DP 3: All students attending international schools must be guaranteed 13 years of school education (*including pre-schools*).
- DP 4: All international schools offering national curriculum must adopt the National Learning Competency Framework (NLCF) prescribed by the National Education Commission (NEC) and National Curriculum and Teachers' Guides and Textbooks prescribed by the National Institute of Education (NIE).

Policies and Strategies

Policy-IS 2.1: The State requires all international schools while using English as the medium of instruction to teach the national languages

Recommended Strategic Activities

- Specified Authority for International School Education must prescribe regulations requiring the following:
 - Allow English to be the medium of instruction from Pre-school, and from Grade 1 to Grade 13.
 - Offer two national languages, Sinhala and Tamil with provisions be made available for Sinhala-speaking children to learn Tamil and Tamil-speaking children to learn Sinhala.

Policy-IS 2.2: The State requires all international schools to comply with the national policy of 13-year guaranteed education and the specified curriculum requirements

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The Specified Authority for International School Education shall take steps to prescribe regulations requiring the following:
 - All international schools must guarantee 13 years of school education for those enrolled and make it compulsory for those schools that do not offer upper senior secondary/collegiate level education to have an agreement with those schools which offer the collegiate level of education to accommodate the transfers.
 - All international schools offering the national curriculum must adopt the NEC prescribed National Learning Competency Framework (NLCF) and NIE prescribed national curriculum.
 - All international schools must ensure that the curricula offered, whether local or foreign, are aimed to promote the acquisition of cognitive and psychosocial skills while imparting knowledge in such areas as gender, health, nutrition, patriotism, ethnic cohesion, social harmony, and unity in diversity.
 - All international schools which are adopting currently 12 years of education would be granted a grace period for transition to 13 years of education.

Core Area – IS 3: Learners and Learning Environment

Directive Principles

- DP 1: Learners must be healthy, well prepared mentally, and motivated to seek education to reach the full potential to make him/her productively employable in the 'world of work'.
- DP 2: The learning environment must be well resourced, clean and well kept, safe, protective, and gender-sensitive.
- DP 3: Learners must be guided throughout the learning process.
- DP 4: Flexible education must be provided for learners to choose their learning pathways/streams of education, and thereby customize their career paths in life according to their talents and interests.
- DP 5: All international schools must forge a multi-partite alliance among students, teachers, parents, and alumni and reach out to the community around the schools to develop mutually beneficial interactions and promote wider community acceptance.
- DP 6: International schools must function as an integral component of the general education system in all affairs – national examinations, sports, and other regional and national competitions.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-IS 3.1:

All international schools shall ensure learners are healthy, well prepared mentally, and motivated to seek education to reach the full potential to make them the wholesome and productive persons

Recommended Strategic Activities

- All international schools shall take steps to offer counselling programmes on child health and nutrition in liaison with the Medical Officer of Health (MOH) of the area and educate parents as well as students on best practices on personal hygiene, cleanliness, etiquette, and nutrition.
- All international schools shall take steps to establish and operate academic counselling and career guidance and counselling services; the academic counselling service must guide and assist students to overcome any learning difficulties that they may encounter, and career guidance and counselling services must guide the students on the options they have as regards streams of upper secondary education and post-secondary education and career opportunities.

Policy-IS 3.2:

All international schools must provide a learning environment with adequate and well-managed learning resources and common amenities, and study and recreational areas

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The Specified Authority for International School Education shall prescribe norms and standards for learning resources and common amenities, and conduct regular monitoring of international schools to ensure compliance with the prescribed standards.
- All international schools shall comply with prescribed standards and guidelines for educational facilities as specified by the Specified Authority with respect to – place, space, resources, and maintenance.
- All international schools shall establish and maintain in-house facility maintenance and safety units and services.

Policy-IS 3.3:

All international schools must promote education through a multi-partite alliance among students, teachers, parents, and alumni, and move towards becoming a part of the national school system with the concurrent promotion of links with the community

Recommended Strategic Activities

- All international schools shall establish an institutional mechanism to promote the multi-partite alliance of students, teachers, parents, and alumni in school affairs.
- All international schools shall take steps to establish formal links with the Provincial, Zonal, and Divisional Education entities to submit their students for inter-school events and competitions, including regional and national events and competitions.
- All international schools shall take steps to devise mechanisms to reach out to the community around the schools to develop mutually beneficial interactions and promote wider community acceptance.

Core Area – IS 4: Teaching-Learning and Assessment**Directive Principles**

- DP 1: All teaching-learning and assessment must be conducted by adequately qualified and trained teachers.
- DP 2: The teaching-learning process must emphasize conceptual understanding rather than rote learning and learning for examinations.
- DP 3: The teaching-learning process must embrace as much as possible learner-centered and activity-based teaching-learning methods to promote experiential/authentic learning that enables the learner to construct her/his knowledge and skills through active participation in the teaching-learning process.

- DP 4: Evaluation and certification of students' achievement should be based on both formative and summative assessments that are designed to ensure validity and reliability.
- DP 5: The teaching-learning and assessment process should conform to best practices and quality standards prescribed by the Specified Authority and the Quality Assurance Agency.
- DP 6: All international schools must offer the opportunity for those students preparing for the local syllabus to appear for G.C.E. (O/L) and G.C.E. (A/L) examinations.
- DP 7: Children and youth should be educated to keep themselves safe from internet threats.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-IS 4.1:

All international schools must ensure teaching-learning and assessment are conducted by qualified and trained teachers abreast with modern educational technologies

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The Specified Authority for International School Education shall prescribe the minimum qualifications for the teaching staff for different school grades of teaching and the requirements of post-recruitment/in-service training.
- All international schools shall comply with the guidelines prescribed by the Specified Authority in teacher recruitment and in-service training requirements.
- All international schools shall promote the adoption of the blended mode of teaching-learning approach with the extensive use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT)-based applications and tools along with the provision of adequate opportunity for students to engage in hands-on learning and open-ended exploration using ICT applications while guiding them to keep themselves safe from internet threats.
- All international schools shall adopt both formative and summative assessments to assess student performance.
- All international schools that offer local curriculum shall prepare students adequately for G.C.E. (O/L) and G.C.E. (A/L) examinations.

Core Area – IS 5: Personality Development and Civic Consciousness

Directive Principles

- DP 1: Education shall facilitate all-round personality development by promoting cognitive, physical, and psychosocial development of children from early childhood to the adult state while promoting behavioural, emotional, social, and spiritual maturity.
- DP 2: Education shall impart psychosocial/life skills such as communication, cooperation, teamwork, leadership, managerial and entrepreneurial skills, and resilience.

- DP 3: Religious education should focus on making students aware of core aspects of all religions (*comparative religion*) in addition to teaching students' professed religion.
- DP 4: Education shall instil nationalism and patriotism to promote affection towards Sri Lankan history, culture, and knowledge systems and traditions.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-IS 5.1:

General education irrespective of the type of provider must be aimed to train high-quality human resources imbued with emotional, social, and spiritual maturity, and values, morals and ethics

Recommended Strategic Activities

- All international schools must ensure the following aspects:
 - All levels of general education provided by the international schools shall include an age-appropriate personal development programme that runs as a strand from Grade 1 to 13, aimed at providing academic, intellectual, and practical training to imbue students with emotional, social, and spiritual maturity, and the students should be encouraged to maintain a portfolio of learning that showcases both the work within the said strand and the work within the core subject areas that promote emotional, social, and spiritual development and imbue children with values, morals and ethics.
 - All international schools shall promote complementary teaching-learning activities (*i.e. group assignments, project work, quiz competitions, creative work, etc.*) to help students to develop their problem-solving, reasoning, critical thinking, creative thinking, communication, and collaborative abilities.
 - All international schools shall promote both co-curricular and extra-curricular activities such as the establishment of student societies/circles/clubs to promote students to engage in a multitude of activities that are focused on promoting positive attributes such as leadership, initiative, teamwork, sharing, etc.
 - All international schools shall offer formal taught courses/modules and programmes focusing on making students aware of core aspects of all religions (*comparative religion*) in addition to teaching students' professed religion.
 - All international schools shall take steps to offer programmes, activities, and events built into the school's annual calendar to instil nationalism and patriotism to promote affection towards Sri Lankan history, culture, and knowledge systems and traditions.

Policy-IS 5.2:

All subjects taught must include learning experiences to impart life skills such as communication, cooperation, teamwork, leadership, managerial and entrepreneurial skills, and resilience

Recommended Strategic Activities

- All international schools shall ensure that each level of general education adopts outcome-based,

student-centered teaching-learning and assessment, and promotes the development of life skills such as communication, cooperation, teamwork, leadership, managerial and entrepreneurial skills, and resilience supplemented through co-curricular activities.

- All international schools shall provide career information and career counselling services, and organize and conduct programmes to promote the soft skills development of students through the Career Guidance and Counselling Units.

Core Area – IS 6: Human Resources

Directive Principles

- DP 1: Teaching staff must have the minimum required qualifications and training, and experience.
- DP 2: Teacher recruitment, promotions, and deployment must be fair and transparent.
- DP 3: Teachers and teaching-support staff must be provided with adequate opportunities for in-service, continuing professional development training, and career progression.
- DP 4: Conducive working environment and service conditions must be provided for teachers, teaching support staff, and other service personnel.
- DP 5: Students must be provided with quality auxiliary services through student counsellors, career guidance personnel, sports instructors/coaches, and health care workers.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-IS 6.1: Teaching staff must have the minimum required qualifications, training, and experience

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The Specified Authority for International School Education shall prescribe regulations specifying the minimum professional/educational qualifications for teacher recruitment and promotions.
- All international schools shall adhere to and comply with minimum requirements prescribed by the Specified Authority in recruiting teaching staff.
- All international schools shall adopt fair and transparent teacher recruitment, promotions, and deployment system and procedures.
- All international schools shall offer all teaching staff adequate opportunities for continuing in-service, professional development, and career progression.
- All international schools shall provide a conducive working environment and service conditions, and promote professional standards of teachers, academic support, and service personnel to ensure the delivery of quality education and services.

- All international schools shall provide quality auxiliary services for students through student counsellors, sports instructors/coaches, career guidance personnel, and support staff.
- All international schools shall take steps to prescribe a Code of Ethics and Practices for all categories of staff and ensure strict adherence to the prescribed norms and practices.

Core Area - IS 7: Physical Resources

Directive Principles

- DP 1: All international schools must ensure the provision of minimum requirements of teaching-learning facilities – adequately resourced classrooms, laboratories, activity rooms, libraries, etc., as required.
- DP 2: All international schools must ensure the provision of required common amenities – running water, electricity, restrooms, sick-rooms and first aid kits, sports facilities, etc.
- DP 3: All international schools must ensure the provision of a technology-enhanced teaching-learning environment.
- DP 4: All international schools must ensure the provision of facilities where possible to accommodate students with special needs in an inclusive environment.

Policies and Strategies

Policy-IS 7.1: All educational institutions must provide adequate learning facilities and a conducive learning environment that facilitates the physical, cognitive, and psychosocial development of children

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The Specified Authority for International Schools must prescribe standards and guidelines on physical resources, specifying the following:
 - Minimum requirements of teaching facilities – adequately resourced classrooms, adequately equipped laboratories, activity rooms, libraries, etc., and
 - Minimum requirement of common amenities – running water and electricity, restrooms, sick-rooms, first aid kits, sports, and recreational facilities, etc.
- All international schools must comply with the requirements of physical resources as specified by the Specified Authority.

Policy-IS 7.2:

All educational institutions must provide technology-enhanced teaching-learning and assessment to promote student-centered and blended teaching and learning coupled with facilities to cater to students with special needs

Recommended Strategic Activities

- All international schools, irrespective of geographical location and student numbers must be provided with ICT facilities with adequate connectivity manned by competent personnel to facilitate the use of technology-aided teaching, learning, and assessment.
- All international schools, irrespective of geographical location and student numbers which accommodate students with special needs must be equipped with the required infrastructure and teaching facilities required to cater to such students. If it is not possible, such students should be channelled to an institution where such facilities are available.

Core Area - IS 8: Quality Assurance and Certification**Directive Principles**

- DP 1: All international schools must adopt nationally prescribed best practices and quality standards and guidelines in the provision of education.
- DP 2: All international schools must seek certification/accreditation from a State designated Standards and Certifying Accreditation Agency.

Policies and Strategies**Policy-IS 8.1:**

All international schools are required to abide by the nationally prescribed regulations, standards and guidelines and shall be subjected to review by the national quality assurance and accreditation system

Recommended Strategic Activities

- The NEC as mandated by its Act and in liaison with the Specified Authority for International School Education shall formulate and implement a quality assurance and accreditation system for all international schools with well-prescribed quality criteria and elements, best practices, and standards, coupled with an objective assessment system.
- All international schools shall foster the concept of quality and make efforts to internalize quality culture within the institution by internalizing the NEC prescribed best practices and standards.
- Specified Authority for International School Education shall make it mandatory for all international schools to seek certification/accreditation from the Quality Assurance Council of the NEC.

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National Education Commission

Prof. Harischandra Abeygunawardena	Chairman National Education Commission (<i>Appointed member</i>)
Ms. Padmini Ranaweera	Vice Chairperson (Policy) National Education Commission (<i>Appointed member</i>)
Mr. M. Kingsly Fernando	Vice Chairman (Planning) National Education Commission (<i>Appointed member</i>)
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Mr. M. Nihal Ranasingha	Secretary, Ministry of Education (<i>Ex-officio; since May 2022</i>)
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Dr. Indrani Talagala	Former Head of Department, Department of Early Childhood and Primary Education, Open University of Sri Lanka (<i>Appointed member</i>)
Dr. Harsha Alles	Chairman, Gateway International School (<i>Appointed member</i>)

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Part III: Aims and Directive Principles of National Education Policy Framework

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IV කොටස – V වැනි වෙළුම : පිරිවෙන් අධ්‍යාපනය
පිරිවෙන අධ්‍යාපනය පිළිබඳ විශේෂඥ කමිටුව

- අතිපුජ්‍ය ගංතුන් අස්සපි මහානායක ස්වාමීන්ද්‍රයන් වහන්සේ
- අතිපුජ්‍ය ත්‍රිකුණාමලේ ආනන්ද මහනායක ස්වාමීන්ද්‍රයන් වහන්සේ
- පුජ්‍ය බලංගොඩ සෝභිත නායක ස්වාමීන්ද්‍රයන් වහන්සේ
- පුජ්‍ය විශ්‍රාමික මහාචාර්ය නවගමුවේ ඊවන ස්වාමීන්ද්‍රයන් වහන්සේ
- පුජ්‍ය වලස්වැවේ ඥාණරතන නායක ස්වාමීන්ද්‍රයන් වහන්සේ
- පුජ්‍ය මහාචාර්ය කොන්ගස්තැන්නේ ආනන්ද නායක ස්වාමීන්ද්‍රයන් වහන්සේ
- පුජ්‍ය ජ්‍යෙෂ්ඨ මහාචාර්ය ඉඳුරාගාමේ ධම්මරතන ස්වාමීන්ද්‍රයන් වහන්සේ
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- පුජ්‍ය වටිනාපහ සෝමානන්ද ස්වාමීන්ද්‍රයන් වහන්සේ
- පුජ්‍ය මහාචාර්ය මැදගොඩ අහයතිස්ස ස්වාමීන්ද්‍රයන් වහන්සේ
- පුජ්‍ය මහාචාර්ය මැදගමපිටියේ විජිතධම්ම ස්වාමීන්ද්‍රයන් වහන්සේ
- මහාචාර්ය අසංග තිලකරත්න මහතා
- කේ. ඒ. තිලකරත්න මහතා (කමිටු සම්බන්ධීකාරක සහ කෙටුම්පත සංස්කාරක)

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